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S U R P R I S E A T T A C K

SOVIET RESPONSE TO GERMAN THREATS
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AMNON SELLA

Ph.D

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| P R E F A C E | |
| CHAPTER I | |
| SOME ASPECTS OF SOVIET HISTORIOGRAPHY | 1 |
| CHAPTER II | |
| DOCTRINE AND TRAINING | 40 |
| CHAPTER III | |
| THE PERCEPTION OF THE THREAT | 107 |
| CHAPTER IV | |
| APPEASEMENT OR CHANGE OF POLICY | 143 |
| CHAPTER V | |
| SURPRISE ATTACK | 220 |
| C O N C L U S I O N | 289 |
| B I B L I O G R A P H Y | 293 |
| A P P E N D I C E S | |

P R E F A C E

This thesis attempts to examine the proposition that a surprise attack, in which one body politic tries to overwhelm another, is a process and not a happening. The method applied - an analysis of a complex of systems involved in the preparation and execution of a total violent encounter - in itself implies that there can be no over-simplified, one facet explanation for the failure to perceive and anticipate an unexpected onslaught.

The first chapter attempts to show the difficulties which Soviet historiography encountered when it grappled with the bitter awareness that the first months of the war were a humiliating and perhaps an unnecessary defeat. The second chapter is an attempt to elaborate on the theoretical background from which Soviet military doctrine evolved. It also provides some data about military technology and training based on the same doctrine. The third chapter looks at some of the effects of a belligerent environment on a neutral but involved party. The same chapter also dwells on the diplomatic and military moves of Germany's highly mobilized and efficient machine as against those of the slow and cumbersome machine of the Soviet Union. The fourth chapter follows the institutional and military awakening of the Soviet government to the sense of danger and examines the tortuous policy employed thereby. It also observes the impact of such a policy on the armed forces. The fifth chapter analyses in some detail the effects of surprise on military and political systems.

CHAPTER I

SOME ASPECTS OF SOVIET HISTORIOGRAPHY

In both unconscious and subconscious fashion Soviet historiography carries on the struggle against wartime Nazism. Under the weight of 20 million dead scattered over the scorched earth of Russia it has not yet dared to tell the truth. As early as 1941-42 Soviet writers were attempting to account for the initial German success.¹ A painful process of heartsearching went on in the literature and poetry of those difficult days, written under the impact of the long and agonising series of setbacks which lasted until after the Soviet victory in Stalingrad. Ruin, starvation and misery on the Soviet side; arrogance, cruelty and atrocities on the part of the Germans; these factors, and the overwhelming emotions which they evoked, simplified the issues. The bitter struggle for survival overshadowed for a while the all-important questions of national preparedness and combat readiness for surprise attack on the eve of the war, though this is not to say that the wartime records themselves and the operational narratives compiled on the morrow of many great engagements lack value.

Post-war history writing was based on genuine, factual elements of the preceding period of history-making. Themes were taken from orders of the day - the original documents of the war, and from diplomatic correspondence which had been published at the time. But the years 1944-48 saw a deliberate process of suppression, engineered by the central institutions and gradually engulfing every sector of Soviet intellectual life. Since it was the time of an

1. Soviet sources have cited many attempts at explaining the setbacks during the first months of the war. See for example: Istoriya russkoi sovetskoi literatury, Moscow, Nauka, 1968, Vol.III, pp.523-530.

immense reconstruction effort, the greatest need was to rise above earlier failures and assert national unity over intellectual curiosity. Stalin, Zhdanov and those of their aides who carried out the censorship crusade were not fooling themselves. They were aware of the millions who knew about the confused orders and lack of leadership during the first weeks of the war. They were not deaf to the questions and they knew many of the answers, but they would not allow their countrymen to indulge in intellectual altercations which might have caused far-reaching changes in the regime. Instead they plunged headlong into a gigantic process of re-orientation. They selected only those facts from the war experience which would serve a unifying historical explanation. Other facts were eliminated and crowds of witnesses were either temporarily or permanently silenced. The effect was not a straightforward lie, more a bizarre kind of truth.

The post-war historians were faced with two major problems, neither of their own choice: whether to write at all and, if so, what to omit. The period 1941-43 provided them with an ample source of documents produced spontaneously under the impact of the German attack, or in the frantic attempt to stem it. The initial dichotomy seemed to be clear-cut. On the one hand there was a rich crop of literature, poetry, newsletters, articles, letters and pamphlets; on the other there were orders of the day, telegrams, recorded telephone conversations, the usual correspondence between military headquarters and civilian institutions, and many professional articles. In both these sectors there had at the time been an intensive correspondence between Soviet writers and their colleagues abroad, as well as between the Soviet Government and foreign governments. However, the sifting of this material proved to be a difficult undertaking even with the

best of intentions.

The whole literary world was called to arms one week after the German attack:-

Every Soviet Author is prepared to participate in the sacred cause of the People's war against the enemies of our Motherland, with all his power, all his experience and talent, if necessary with every drop of his blood.²

Many Soviet writers carried out this mission to the letter and were killed in action. All of them contributed to the best of their creative abilities. Among them were people of integrity, keen insight and candid style. In their works these writers attempted to come to terms with the basic concepts like 'motherland', 'courage', 'hatred' and 'defiance', and to express feelings dear to every soldier like 'home', 'mother' and 'son'.³

2. Literaturnaya Gazeta, 29th June, 1941.

3. For representative samples of this genre see Alexei Surkov, 'Serdtsa Materei', September, 1942; 'Ni Shagy Nazad' Listovka So Stikhami 1942; 'Stikhi O Nenavisti' Sbornik Voennykh Stikhotvorenii 1943, I.I. Anisimov et al (editors) Literaturnoe nasledstvo sovetskie pisateli na frontakh Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny, Moscow, Nauka, 1966; see also A. Werth, The Year of Stalingrad, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1946, pp.81, 143-6, 169, 304, 468, for an account of Surkov the 'Soldier's Poet'. A. Surkov took part in the 'Accursed War' (klyatva voyna) from 26th June, 1941. I am using Surkov words as a direct quote from tape recorded interview, 1967, see, Soviet Military Materials Collection (Professor J. Erickson, Higher Defence Studies, University of Edinburgh, henceforth cited as SMMC), see also, K. Simonov, 'Russkie Lyudi' 1941-42; L. Leonov, 'Nashestvie', 1941; A. Korneichuk, 'Front' 1942, Velikaya Otechestvennaya, Moscow, Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, 1966; also V. Grossman, Narod bessmertn, Moscow, Goslitizdat, 1942.

'The war has made it our duty to understand the Russian person as a historical phenomenon' ('ponyat russkogo cheloveka kak istoricheskogo phenomena')⁴

In his first war article, Shto mi zashchishchaem (What do we defend?), Tolstoi reminded his readers of Russia's long and difficult history. Another writer, B. Gorbатов, wrote in 1942:-

'Motherland is a general word. There are twenty million square kilometers and two hundred million people on the land. But to every one Motherland is the very neighbourhood, the very hut where he was born'⁵

I. Ehrenburg, dealing with the duty of the writer, wrote:-

'It is not the right time now to talk about the influence the war has on the creative power of one poet or another. Far more important is to establish what influence the creative writer has upon the soldier'.⁶

Apart from coming to terms with the significance of the war they were fighting, Soviet writers had to define their image of the enemy.

4. A. Tolstoi, 'Russkii Kharakter', Istoriya russkoi sovetskoi literatury, Vol.III p.31.

5. Ibid., p.33.

6. Ibid., (Quoted from Literatura i iskusstvo, 3rd February, 1942).

Despite political reasons to do otherwise⁷, the general line taken in articles and literary works during the early years of the war was unlimited hatred developed into the 'scientific' exploitation of emotion 'nauka nenavisti', the 'science of hate'⁸. The Germans were portrayed as monsters who did not deserve humane treatment and who only got it because no Soviet soldier would descent so low as the German-Fascists own standard⁹.

7. The official line finally made a distinction between 'Hitler and his Gang' and the German People. See for instance S. Golikov, Vidayushchiesya Pobedy Sovetskoi Armii v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine, Gospolitizdat, 1954, p.55 'The Soviet people destroy the German-Fascist occupiers not because they hate the German nation but because the German-Fascist aggressors dared to encroach on a sacred Soviet soil'. Compare Marshall I.V. Stalin, On The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, Speeches, Orders of the Day, and answers to foreign press correspondents, London, Hutchison and Co., Ltd., 1943. 'Speech at celebration meeting of the Moscow Soviet of Working People's Deputies and Moscow Party and Public Organisations' 6th November, 1941, p.17: 'The German invaders want a war of extermination with the peoples of the U.S.S.R. well, if the Germans want to have a war of extermination, they will get it', to 'Order of the Day No.55, 23rd February, 1942, p.27 'The foreign press sometimes carries such twaddle as that the Soviet people hate the Germans just as Germans, that the Red Army exterminate German soldiers out of hatred for everything German and that therefore the Red Army does not take German soldiers prisoner, that of course is a similar stupid lie'.
8. Nauka Nenavisti is the name of a book of short stories by Sholokhov, published by Pravda, 1942; see also A. Werth, op.cit. pp.80-81.
9. Wartime hatred was built on former emotional layers consisting of suspicion, fear, but also longstanding cultural influence and even admiration, see: M.T. Florinsky, Russia, a History and an Interpretation, New York, Macmillan, 12th printing, 1967, vol.II pp.808, 936; also Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, The Spirit of Russia, London, Drayton House, 1961, pp.120-125; also, Von Karl-Heinz Jansen, 'Solschenizyn: August Vierzehn', Die Zeit, No.31, 4th August, 1972, p.11, emphasising the author's admiration for the German soldier.

Grossman, Sholokhov, Simonov, Nekrasov, Tikhonov, Surkov, Polevoi, A. Bek and others contributed by writing stories and poetry. Articles had some elements of pathos (V publitsistike vozradilis elementi pateticheskoy prozy)¹⁰ while stories were written in simple 'front-line' language. An impressive, impressionistic book like K. Simonov's Dni i Nochi (first published in Krasnaya Zvezda 24th September 1942, and as a book in 1944) used a language which strikes the reader with its 'appealing absence of bombast'.¹¹ M. Aliger,¹² Anna Akhmatova, A. Surkov and Tvardovski,¹³ to mention but a few, used their poetical power to touch emotions which no other form of art can move. On top of all this the historians found innumerable newsletters, personal letters and diaries as well as films and press releases. The selection of these documents carrying the direct impact of the war made the history books of the post-war period.

The first miserable year of the war called for harsh, realistic treatment. Later, the first confrontation with the Germans was to be a source of embarrassment, and frank narration of Simonov's

10. Istoriya Sovetskoy Literatury, Vol.III, p.31.

11. G. Struve, Soviet Russian Literature 1917-1950, University of Oklahoma Press, 1951, p.301.

12. Margarita Aliger, Zoya, Moscow, Molodaya Gvardiya, 1943. Some of the poems in this volume were written during the first year of war, for instance: 'Sokol'niki' September, 1941; 'Kiev', December, 1941; 'Vesny v Leningrad', 1942, is a most powerful poem from that terrible year. See also A. Werth, op.cit., p.146 for the significance of the name 'Zoya' and Lidov's reportage about her.

13. Tvardovskii, 'Vasili Terkin' Krasnoarmeiskaya Pravda No.425, 4th September, 1942 (quoted in Literaturnoe nasledstvo).

type frowned upon. A. Bek's Volokolamskoe Shosse (1944), which had dealt with the defence of Moscow during the terrible winter of 1941, raised the all-important question of the Red Army officer's role. This too was to be treated differently later, after the war was won. Poems and pamphlets praising the allies and the Grand Alliance, or merely describing Great Britain and the U.S.A. in favourable terms, were to be equally embarrassing in times to come.

War-time literature had been written with patriotic zeal by people who were undoubtedly devoted to the cause. Only a few of them touched on controversial issues; the rest wrote simple, patriotic material of indifferent literary value which could be used anytime, sometimes with alterations like the Molodaya Gvardiya by Fadeev.¹⁴ The bulk of this material was doomed to temporary oblivion, but some of it was to be alternately shelved and re-published.¹⁵

The military side did not fare any better, although the post mortem was easier. Books, poems and pamphlets were published and distributed with the state's blessing. Hundreds of thousands of books and leaflets found their way into private libraries. It was a laborious, indeed impossible task to withdraw them all.¹⁶ With official documents it was a different story. They were restricted and were meant to reach as few people as possible. This was the case

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14. M. Gallagher, The Soviet History of World War II, New York, London, Frederick A. Praeger, 1963, p.58. Kultura i zhizn, November 1947, criticized Molodaya Gvardiya saying that the party was not represented correctly in the book.
 15. Harrison E. Salisbury, The Siege of Leningrad, London, Secker and Warburg, 1969, pp.571-580.
 16. A. Werth, op.cit., p.146 of the 1942 edition of Tvardovskii's Vasili Terkin 80,000 copies were printed.

with maps, orders and certainly telegrams and telephone conversations. Whereas the official line concerning literature was tortuous and erratic the line concerning documents was clear-cut. Although complete silence might have been the best solution the Soviet Government could not follow this course. Mass media had ever been essential in the Soviet Union. Second best was selection.

The months preceding, and the first hours, days and weeks of the Great Patriotic War were baffling and confused. Political directives were ambiguous, both calling for alertness and warning against provocation and orders were given and withdrawn.¹⁷ However, since the beginning of the war all the orders were consistent in at least one respect: they were all permeated with defiance, all aimed at the destruction of the enemy. Many orders were belated, confusing, equivocal and impossible to carry out, but none was defeatist, not a single one called upon the Red Army to surrender. At times, during the first retreats and encirclements, this very determination worked to the detriment of the army, but the spirit in which these orders were promulgated and often their very wording helped, later, to construct a better image of the initial period of the war. Thus, in order of the day No.308 of 18th September, 1941, Stalin mentioned active defence (aktivnaya oborona).¹⁸ Irrespective of whether this

17. Meretskoy, Na sluzhbu narodu, Moscow, Politizdat, 1970, p.205; see also Bagramyan, Tak nachinalas voyna, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1971, p.68; see also Nekrasov, Front Line Stalingrad, London, Sphere Books, 1970, pp.9-10.

18. R. Garthoff, How Russia Makes War, London, Bradford and Dickens, 1954, p.439. 'Active Defence' in the form of counter-attacks was conducted from the very first days of the war.

type of defence had been necessary in September 1941, the expression was used later to mould the Stalinist version of the war.

On the other hand, attempts to deal squarely and professionally with the disasters of the initial period, like Galaktionov's article in Voennaya mysl No.6, 1942,¹⁹ were not encouraged, later, when the official line had changed. In the order of the day, 23rd February, 1942, there had been an evaluation of surprise attack which was deprecated in favour of the 'permanently operating factors' as defined by Stalin, namely the stability of the rear, the morale of the army, the quantity and quality of the divisions, the armaments available and the organizing ability of the command personnel. The 'permanent' were contrasted with the 'transitory' factors of which only one was mentioned by Stalin - 'surprise attack'.²⁰ In the context of 1942, when the outcome of the war was still in the balance,²¹ it was a brave and politically shrewd thing to say, but later, in a new context, it became another element of 'Stalinist military science'. When the 'Stalinist version' of the war was taking shape, an attempt was made to cover up the real nature of the surprise at the beginning of the war, and to present the retreats and defeats of that period as a pre-planned scheme which had aimed to trade territory

19. Gallagher, op.cit. p.73. Analysing the failure of the Blitzkrieg Major-General Galaktionov said that the basic German weakness was lack of sufficiently strong strategic forces capable of deciding the outcome of the war before the Red Army had succeeded in re-establishing its defence front.

20. Garthoff, op.cit. pp.18, 34-35, 450 N.27.

21. A. Werth, op.cit. pp.126, 139, 148, 152-155. A sample of diary entries of July, 1942, depicting the situation, the mood and the propaganda lines in the Soviet Union in those days.

for the time needed to mobilize and concentrate the Red Army. The fact that the army had not been ready before was explained by the treacherous nature of the German attack. A pre-planned scheme like that could only have been implemented if the rear was stable, the morale of the army high, and the other 'permanent factors' were operative. Since the ideological assumption was that the Soviet 'art of war' was superior to any other, indeed unique, it followed that no 'transitory factor' like surprise could prevail. Consequently any attempt to deal with the nature of surprise attack was frowned upon because it meant the deprecation of Stalinist military science. Whatever had been the reasons for the war-time terminology, those phrases later assumed a different political role. The damaging ones were conveniently dropped, the useful ones were tailored for their new ideological place in post-war historiography.

The Grand Alliance had its share of this tribulation. During the period 1941-43 British and American aid was absolutely necessary. The Red Army was dreadfully mauled; the war industry, in the process of its evacuation to the east, could hardly cope with the tremendous task of keeping the war machine going, and the cry for 'a second front now' was both genuine and desperate. So were the suspicions and frustrations on the Soviet side when it did not materialize until 1944. Both these contradictory imperatives found expression at the time, for instance in Stalin's May-day speech in 1942, when Great Britain and the U.S.A. were assigned first place among freedom-loving countries, and in many articles in the Soviet press at the time, as well as in some stormy meetings between Stalin

and Churchill.²² However, during the Cold War only the frustrations and the suspicions were emphasized, the positive aspects of the alliance and of the allies' contribution to the war effort being forgotten.²³

The tone of the writing changed considerably during 1943 when the Soviet leadership, still facing bitter fighting, had grounds to believe that the black days of Kiev, Kharkov and the retreat to the Volga would not return. At the beginning of 1944 the Soviet Union no longer faced destruction, but there were still fierce battles ahead, and the immense devastation of nearly three years of war was gradually becoming impressed on people's minds. The problem of victory and reconstruction pushed aside for a while the painful quest for the causes of the initial defeats. Post-war Europe was beginning to take shape even before the landing in Normandy.

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22. Herbert Feis, Churchill Roosevelt Stalin, The War They waged and the Peace They Sought, Princeton University Press, 1957, pp.74-79; see also: Churchill, The Second World War, Cassell and Co., Ltd., 1950, Vol.IV. pp.60-63, 70.
23. Gallagher, op.cit., pp.24N,50,70,88; see also Stalin's correspondence with Churchill, Attlee, Roosevelt and Truman, 1941-1945, London Lawrence and Wishart, 1958, p.12 (18 July, 1941) pp.20-22 (6 September, 1941) Note in particular p.22 - 'Our common liberation cause', p.38 (27 December, 1941), p.40 (14 February, 1942), p.56 (23 July, 1942) the 'Second Front' is the recurrent theme in many of the documents, but starting from July there is a noticeable urgency and impatience on the Soviet side. p.178 (26 December, 1941), pp.180-181 (27 December, 1944) pp.200-201 (29 March, 1945) pp.205-206 (3 April, 1945). These documents are a sample testifying to the rudiments of the cold war. See also: Herbert Feis, From Trust to Terror, the onset of the cold war 1945-1950, London, Anthony Blond, 1970 pp.15-16, 20-26; also David Horowitz, From Yalta to Vietnam, Penguin Books, 1969, p.25-26, 31-33. Both Feis and Horowitz emphasise the decisive effect of Roosevelt's death on Soviet-American relations.

The nations's attention had to be turned from the terrible past, about which many a good writer still wrote, towards the future which was being moulded and planned in the minds of Churchill, Truman (who replaced Roosevelt on 12th April, 1944) and Stalin. Not only material devastation faced the victors at the end of the war; the burden of their spiritual wounds was as heavy. Ruined cities could be reconstructed with money and toil, but maimed spirits needed soothing, encouragement and inspiring leadership.

At the end of the war Stalin paid an astonishing tribute to the Russian people.²⁴ There was still hope of keeping the unity of leadership and people as it had been formulated during the war, but that meant paying tribute to the living as well as to the dead; the praising of victory as well as investigating defeat; condemning those responsible for the initial debacle while rewarding the heroes. The risk of free discussion was its prize - the truth. On 9th February 1946, Stalin made it clear he was not going to take this course. In a speech to the electors of the Stalin district in Moscow he inaugurated the official reinterpretation of the war. According to this, the German attack did not come as a surprise; the Party and the Soviet system had prepared the country for war. Hence there were no defeats; it had all been well planned. Soon, the outline of a retroactive strategy was discernible, while the nascent hope for a better future was dashed. During the period 1946-48 there were still various voices, reminiscent of the heroic past. Pravda's editorial on Victory Day 1946 mentioned Stalin's tribute of

24. Gallagher, op.cit. p.21.

the previous year to his fellow countrymen, and to the soldiers who raised the flag on the Reichstag. On 22nd June 1946, in Pravda, the historian Mints praised the people and the military leaders, while Zamyatin wrote on the same date, in the same paper, about the Stavka and 'our generals and officers'. Yet the Stalin version was gradually being shaped into an all-pervasive ideology of the Great Patriotic War. In February 1947 Stalin wrote his letter to Colonel Razin²⁵ in which he claimed that he had applied a complex and subtle strategy of counter-offensive.²⁶ This was the cue; other writers followed suit. Thereafter German perfidy, British slyness and American imperialism became easy targets. They were accused of a colossal conspiracy against the Soviet Union. They had taken part in the intervention, they were parties to German reconstruction after both the first and second world wars and they were in collusion over the Munich Agreement, which was described as 'the price of an undertaking (by Germany) to launch war on the Soviet Union'.²⁷ Thus the allies' contribution was not merely played down but actually denigrated.

In 1949, on his 70th birthday, Stalin reviewed the whole course of the war without mentioning the name of any general.²⁸ Having established himself as the sole hero of the Great Patriotic War and a military innovator of genius, he proceeded to revise both

25. Gallagher, op.cit., p.42.

26. See Note 20.

27. Gallagher, op.cit., p.24. Compare to sentiments expressed in Stalin, op.cit., p.12.

28. Gallagher, op.cit., p.19.

past history (The Tarle dispute²⁹) and recent history. The war in the Pacific was by and large a Japanese venture and since the Battle of Midway basically an American commitment. The Russians acknowledged this fact as well as their own weakness at sea, and Avarin's book Bor'ba za Tikhii Okean which was published in 1947 did not dispute the fact. However by that time the Cold War had already been under way and the Stalin version of the war was nearly completed. Under such circumstances there was no room for praise of the U.S.A. navy. By 1947 the American maritime capability was no longer considered part of a 'Grand Alliance' aimed at a Fascist aggressor, but a tool of 'World Imperialism' designed to threaten the Soviet Union. The new version of the book which was published in 1952 was overtly anti-American.³⁰

In the new version of the war, the initial defeats were depicted as part of a pre-planned strategy. In this description there was no room for surprise attack.³¹ The Germans were treacherous and in collusion with other imperialist powers - the former allies - and they attacked the peace-loving first Socialist country in the world. But the wise leader had foreseen it all and, together with the Communist Party, or even alone, had prepared the country for the contest between Socialism and Capitalism in its basest form - Imperialism. The Stalin version of the History of the Great Patriotic War, 1941-1945, had to account for strategic and global

29. M. Gallagher, op.cit., p.54.

30. Ibid., pp.85,88.

31. Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya, (Second Edition), Leningrad, 1951, Vol.8 p.439.

problems as well as tactical and national ones. The easiest problems to gloss over were the global ones. Only a few people were involved in decision-making in the highest Soviet echelons. The problems were of a different nature, however, lower down in the command, and worse still among the soldiers baptized in battle between 22nd June and 3rd July 1941. Those who survived the war were mature enough afterwards to understand what had happened. The theoretical, and indeed the practical significance of surprise attack was diminished in the Stalin version of the war, contrary to their personal experiences which were, more often than not, private hells.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the period is the scarcity of writing about the war. Altogether, up to 1947, there was only one pamphlet of 71 pages - Professor I.I. Mints' Velikaya Otechestvennaya voina Sovetskogo Soyuza - published in Moscow in 1947.³² The History of the Second World War was re-written, interspersed with episodes taken from reality but interpreted according to contemporary policies and needs. From 1948-53 the Stalin version was the only one. S. Golikov's book Vidayushchiesya pobedy Sovetskoi Armii v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine, the second edition of which was printed in 1954, is one of the finest examples of the

32. S. Bialer, (Editor), Stalin and his Generals, New York, Pegasus, 1969, p.16N. During the war and immediately afterwards there were several works describing particular campaigns. The following list is a sample: Osvobozhdennii Tikhvin, sbornik dokumentov i materialov o razgrome nemetsko - fashistskikh voisk pod Tikhvinom v Dekabre, 1941 goda, Leningrad, Lenizdat, 1941; also A.S. Chuyanov, Bolsheviki Stalingrad - gorod - geroya, gorod slavy, Moscow, Gospolitizdat, 1946; also E.A. Shilovskii et al, Vostochno-Pruskaya operatsiya krasnoi Armii 1945g., Moscow, Voenizdat, 1946; also, N. Artem'ev Razgrom nemetsko - fashistkikh voisk v Vengrii, desyati udar Oktyabr 1944 - Mart 1945g., Moscow, Voenizdat, 1947.

'Stalin Version', in which defeat, disorder, cowardice, surprise and shock were not to be mentioned. This version, however, was fraught with pitfalls which became apparent very soon after Stalin's death. But even though the post-Stalin version tended to generalise less than the previous one, the approach was still on the large scale; that is to say, no attempt was made to analyse what really happened to the soldiers who died on the western border before they were given the order to open fire. The brilliance of the ultimate victory covered up the misery of the initial setbacks. The use of generalisations like the 'Communist Party won', the 'Leader of genius planned', 'the Great Soviet People fought' made it impossible to find out what individual communists were doing, whether plans existed and, if so, whether they worked. Was it true that the Great Soviet People fought, or did only part of it fight? Did it fight all the time or only part of the time, and with what degree of success at each period?

The new approach to the problem of surprise attack is closely associated with the rising influence of Zhukov, who became Minister of Defence on 9th February, 1955. (In March, 1955 six officers were promoted to the rank of Marshall of the Soviet Union and four to Marshal of a branch of the armed forces.) Throughout his life as an adult Zhukov was a professional soldier. Although it was inevitable that his growing influence on the armed forces and the assertiveness of the military in the first years following Stalin's death, would have political undertones, Zhukov's main interest was professional.³³

33. R. Kolkowicz, The Soviet Military and the Communist Party, Princeton University Press, 1967, pp.245-248 for a different interpretation of the period 1953-1957.

The new balance of power in Europe and beyond forced a new outlook on both strategists and politicians. Preoccupation concerning a future nuclear war imposed a different attitude towards past events on some writers. The unified picture of a pre-planned, well conducted Soviet war strategy crumbled under endless blows from many directions. A reappraisal of surprise attack was necessitated by the contemporary preponderance of nuclear weapons. In order to prepare for a possible nuclear surprise attack it was necessary to understand the causes of the previous failure to anticipate the German one. Thus the increasing influence of the military and the considerable 'nuclear gap' between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. combined to create a more sober approach to the Great Patriotic War than hitherto. Proryv podgotvlennoi oborony strelkovymi soyedineniyami, (breakthrough rifle units prepared line of defence) is a collection of professional articles (published in 1957)³⁴ about the ways and the means used by the Red Army during 41 operations from 7-8 December, 1941, to 16-18 April, 1945. Every article is accompanied by a schematic map and complete data about artillery. Although A.M. Samsonov's book Velikaya Bitva pod Moskvoy³⁵ deals with the political side of the war, it is basically a balanced account of the war and its historiography. It is a step forward in Soviet

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34. Proryv podgotovlennoi oborony strelkovymi soedineniyami, po opytu Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny 1941-45, sbornik statei, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1957; also, Major General N.M. Mironov, Lieutenant-Colonel V.A. Matsulenko (Editors), Sbornik materialov po istorii Sovetskogo voennogo iskusstva v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine 1941-45, (Frunze Academy), Voenizdat, 1956.
35. A.M. Samsonov, Velikaya Bitva pod Moskvoy, Moscow, Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1958, pp.7-13, 50.

approach in stating that the Great Patriotic War was part of the Second World War. It is also stating that there were mistakes in the conduct of the war during the first months. These books together with books by Kharitonov - Boevie deistvie Sovetskoi Armii pod Tikhvinom v 1941 godu, Moscow, 1958, and Bitva za Tula, sbornik materialov i dokumentov, Tula 1957 and by B. Borisov - Podvig Sevastopolya, Moscow, 1957, and Vtoraya Mirovaya Voina 1939-45g.³⁶ are but a few examples of the many works which saw light in that period. The professional military approach on the one hand and a more balanced political approach on the other paved the way to better understanding of the first period of the war.

By a process of cross-fertilisation, the fine arts were creating the climate for freer research. A Central Committee document of 3rd July 1953, portrayed the war as a triumph of Party policy and ignored Stalin.³⁷ With Stalin's inhibiting figure phasing out, rejuvenation of military thought became an easier matter, and this happened none too soon. After the first Soviet Hydrogen explosion it was high time to introduce new lines of thought to the Army. The emergence of ideas like 'first strike capability', 'pre-emptive strike' and 'deterrence' made a study of the previous war experience a factor of commanding importance. The first to broach the problem of

36. Lieutenant-General S.P. Platonov et.al. (editors) Vtoraya Mirovaya Voina, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1958.

37. Gallagher, op.cit. p.129.

NOTE:

The books mentioned in Notes Nos. 34,35,36 signify a change of approach to history writings of the war, as such they facilitated the way to better understanding of surprise attack and were fore-runners of the Istoriya Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voiny Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945 (henceforth cited as IVOV with relevant year of publication and volume number). See also: H.S. Dinerstein, War and the Soviet Union, London, Frederick A. Praeger, 1962, p.11.

surprise attack and its significance was Marshal Rotmistrov in an article which appeared in Voennaya mysl (February 1955) under the title 'O role vnezapnosti v sovremennoi voine'. Voennaya mysl (No.3, 1955) claimed the official history led not only to distortion of the actual military events of 1941, but also to idealisation of the form of combat portrayed, 'and incorrectly orientates our military cadres to the possibilities of repeating it in a future war'.³⁸ Literaturnaya Gazeta followed with an article (28th May 1955) by the Deputy Chief of the Main Political Administration, Lieutenant General Shatilov, warning against the danger of Western attack and calling for a reappraisal of surprise attack in World War II. Marshal Rotmistrov pushed on in November 1955, in an article in Voennii vestnik No.11, entitled Vnezapnost v istorii vojn, which proved that military circles were interested in the theoretical discussion of surprise attack.

The road to the 20th Party Congress was wide open. Not all the problems had been aired, and there were many disputes as to how far criticism could go without undermining the very foundation of authority, be it of the State, the Party, or the Military. In literature some liberal critics went so far as to call into question all and any authority. Prominent among these was V. Pomerantsev, who argued persuasively that 'the degree of sincerity, i.e., the spontaneity, of a work ... must be the main yardstick of its worth,

38. Gallagher, op.cit., p.133; see also, H.S. Dinerstein, op.cit., p.9; also Ibid., pp.170-174. A long quotation from Voennaya mysl No.3, 1955, pp.3-17, alluding among other things to the difficulties in publishing Marshal Rotmistrov's article.

rather than its political correctness'.³⁹ However, the problem on the military side was different. The most ardent critics themselves did not suggest that the authority of the state or even that of the Party should be discarded. The revision of the past and the search for a new cohesive interpretation, to be used as an ideology which would improve combat-readiness in the future, were conducted simultaneously. The 'secret speech' at the 20th Party Congress⁴⁰ set the seal on the break from the mythical Stalinist version of the war. It was a violent wrench which caused Togliatti to react:

Previously all the good was due to the superhuman qualities of one man; now all the evil is attributed to his equally exceptional and shocking defects.⁴¹

Directly or indirectly, the 20th Party Congress precipitated the revolts in Poland and Hungary, which in their turn halted the process of de-Stalinisation. Although it was later to gather momentum once more and along much the same lines, it was never to be entirely satisfactory with regard to the vital re-evaluation of surprise attack. It had a beneficial effect only within the context of other

39. V. Erlich, 'Soviet Literary Criticism: Past and Present' A. Brumberg, (Editor), Russia under Khrushchev, Methuen and Co. Ltd., London, 1962, p.354. This approach was criticized during 1955 as: 'Philistinism, Apolitical and Subjectivism'.

40. Jane Degras, 'Anatomy of Tyranny: Khrushchev attack on Stalin' Ibid., pp.79-84, see also: Michel Tatu, Power in the Kremlin, (translated by Helen Katel), Collins, London, 1969, pp.40-50; also E. Crankshaw, Khrushchev, Collins, London, 1966, pp.227-243, for the text of the speech, the authenticity of which has never been denied by the Russians, see, T.H. Rigby (Editor), The Stalin Dictatorship, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1966, pp.23-84.

41. M. Frankland, Khrushchev, Penguin Books, Ltd., 1966, p.124.

liberalizing measures, such as rehabilitation of the Purges' victims, and of prisoners of war, many of whom still languished defamed. As Togliatti pointed out, there was no panacea in stressing the negative aspects of what had previously been considered to have only positive ones. Applying de-Stalinisation to the interpretation of the war was but another form of over-simplification, as the problem seemed highly complex, and the area of responsibility for ill-preparedness before the war far too wide. No one person could be blamed for it, not even one particular sector of the leadership. In short, many more areas were opened up for research in the Khrushchev period, and more material became available, but the research method was not yet adjusted to deal with the real reasons for the success of the German surprise attack.

Even though the 'thaw' was practically over, the relaxed attitude of the Party was not slow in producing fruit. On 25th February 1956 the 20th conference of the Communist Party unanimously ratified the Khrushchev report about the 'Cult of the Personality' which is 'foreign to Marxism-Leninism'⁴² and asked the Central Committee to liquidate its results. In April-May 1956 Voprosi istorii called for a broad review of the whole of Stalin's historical legacy, including the war. In September 1957 the Central Committee decided to sponsor a new multi-volume history of the war and the historians were carefully instructed as to the nature of the work they were expected to produce:

42. Voprosy ideologicheskoi raboty sbornik vazhneishikh reshenii KPSS (1954-1961 godi), Moscow, Politicheskoi Literatury, 1961, p.11.

It was deemed necessary to print during 1957-60 the 'History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union in 1941-45'; in five volumes⁴³

The 'History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union in 1941-45' should present deep Marxist research into all the aspects of the war history during the years 1941-45

The work should be an informative general review and characterisation of the preparations of Fascist Germany and other Imperialist powers to unleash aggression against the Soviet Union; it should show the heroic battle of the Soviet Union at both front and rear; the most important operations of the Soviet Army and Navy; the might of the armed forces and the superiority of Soviet military art.⁴⁴

The sixth volume was apparently produced as an afterthought and on the whole the Soviet historians were true to above terms of reference. The six-volume 'History of the Great Patriotic War' was a milestone on the road of Soviet historiography.

One of the results of the 'cult of personality' (kult lichnosti) in the science of history was the insufficiency of archival documents, the narrowness of the source substance and the limited themes of research.⁴⁵

The 'History of the Great Patriotic War' set out to correct these shortcomings of the past, but it was still caught within the straight-jacket of its own terms. The interpretation of the war was still deficient (Stalin occupied his place at the dock, together with Zhukov) but many new facts saw light for the first time. Although

43. IVOV, 1964, Vol.VI, p.405.

44. Voprosy ideologicheskoi raboty, p.111

45. IVOV, 1964, Vol.VI p.404.

no order of battle of the Red Army prior to 21st June 1941 was provided, there was ample data indicating procurement and production difficulties in pre-war years. If, in Stalin's time the unpreparedness of the country in 1941 was a forbidden subject and the 1941 surprise wholly attributed to the treacherous nature of the attack, in these books there was evidence enough of difficulties which caused the state of unpreparedness, and of the blame attaching to Stalin.

Even though the Khrushchev period did not entirely open up the question of surprise attack, it did point the way to a new mode of writing about the war, and, consequently, made historical research more fruitful. One thousand and two hundred books, pamphlets and articles about the war were written during the years 1946-56, whereas during the years 1956-61 there were over two thousand. In 1946-56 there were thirty-five books about the first period of the war and in 1956-60 there were one hundred and eighteen.⁴⁶ Anfilov's book, Nachalo Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny,⁴⁷ which first came out in 1962, marked a major breakthrough in the study of 1941 and surprise attack. This book by Anfilov deals squarely with the first month of the war (22nd June to mid-July 1941) basing its findings on personal experience as well as on archival material. In the second edition Bessmertnyi Podvig,⁴⁸ Anfilov extends his reach, using more archival documents

46. IVOV, 1964, Vol.VI, p.406, Note, The key journal Voenno - Istoricheskii Zhurnal began re-publication in 1959, (henceforth cited as VIZ).

47. V.A. Anfilov, Nachalo Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1962. It was published in 50,000 copies, indicating a popular edition.

48. V.A. Anfilov, Bessmertnyi Podvig, Moscow, NAUKA, 1971. This edition was published in only 25,000 copies.

to describe in great detail the activities of Armies and of small units, sometimes as small as one artillery battery. He was obviously interested in grand strategy but he concentrated his attention more on the deeds of commanders in the field. At the same time, the vastly increased bulk of the second edition can be explained not merely by the addition of new material, particularly in the area of viewing surprise attack in terms of Soviet doctrinal appreciation, but also by long (even long-winded) political explanations which are designed to exonerate the Party. This was absent in the first edition and even in the second, for all this elaborate addition, it is still apparent that the Party cannot be completely exonerated. For obvious reasons, Anfilov's findings must form an appreciable element of this present study: all that is intended at this juncture is to place him in the chronology of fundamental writing on 1941.

As soon as rigorous censorship was relaxed and military historians felt their hands freer, the discussion was brought down to the battle-fields. Gradually it became possible to write in a critical way about episodes in small sections of the enormous front. Konstantin Simonov's book Zhivie i Mertvie gives an account of the panic in Moscow on 16th October 1941⁴⁹ and probes the problems of surprise.⁵⁰ The above account and many others were in glaring contrast to the neat picture of pre-planned, well organised retreat and counter-offensive of the 'Stalin version'. The marshals and the

49. A. Werth, Russia at War, London, 1964, pp.228-233. For an account of the panic in Moscow - bol'shoi drap!

50. K. Simonov, Zhivie i Mertvie, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1961, p.281 16th October in Moscow; p.275, Masha and Zosima Ivanovich's conversation.

services were competing with each other as to who, or which, was the first to sense the approaching war in June, May, even April 1941. Every arm and service attempted to stress its own special contribution to the war effort.

Only with very great difficulty did we prove the necessity of creating anti-tank artillery formations. For over a year the Hitlerite invaders had demonstrated the massive use of tanks on the fields of Europe. We had to prepare reliable artillery screens against them.⁵¹

In his book V nachale voyny, A.I. Yeremenko says:

Generally speaking, many of us who seriously analysed the problem of employing tanks in modern warfare doubted the advisability of organising tank forces in brigade-size units.⁵²

These are only two of many such comments.

Throughout the Khrushchev period, 1957-64, Khrushchev's personal role during the war was emphasised while Stalin's was denigrated and Zhukov's slowly vanished. There were still many distortions, too many omissions and too few primary sources.

51. Chief Marshal Artillery Voronov, Na sluzhbe voennoi, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1963, pp.166-167. See also Ibid., pp.157-162, 165-169. See also I.I. Fedyuninskii, Podnyatie po trevoze, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1964, pp.5,10,12; also K.S. Moskalenko, Na yugo-zapadnogo napravlenii, Moscow, Nauka, 1969, pp.14-28; also, Anfilov, Bessmertnyi podvig, pp.95-96, 116-118,134, also Marshal M.V. Zakharov 'Stranitsy istorii sovetskikh vooruzhennykh sil nakanune Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny', Voprosy istorii, No.5, 1970, pp.44-48.

52. A.I. Yeremenko, V nachale voine, Nauka, 1964, p.48, see also pp.39-41,46 (A former edition, A.I. Yeremenko, Na zapadnom napravlenii, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1959).

The scientific quality of sources and archival material (dealing with the history of the Great Patriotic War. A.S.) was put in doubt. Archival stocks were used, as a rule, to illustrate well-known postulations. The regard for fact, without which history as a science is simply impossible, was not there.⁵³

Yet, with all this, there was notably less cogency in official interpretation. Some marshals, who felt they would be protected by Khrushchev, put out their own versions of what happened within their special field of responsibility during the war, as did many other commanders who published their memoirs during that period - P.I. Batov, V pokhodakh i boyakh; S.S. Biryuzov, Kogda gremeli pushki; A.V. Gorbатов, Gody i voiny and A.G. Golovko, Vmeste s flotom were but a few.⁵⁴ Sometimes they wrote for an ulterior motive, for reasons of personal exoneration or in order to praise or accuse. At all events the personal intention proved stronger than the political line, and after the fall of Khrushchev the trickle became a flood. More and more people from the second and third ranks wanted to put right not only the Stalinist wrongs but also those of the Khrushchev era. The result was that instead of the sweeping scenarios of the 'Stalin version', which purported to cover rather than discover, the new style penetrated deep into events at the level of small units or remote areas.

53. IVOV, 1964, Vol.VI, p.410.

54. For complementary bibliography see IVOV 1964, Vol.VI p.413 N4 see also, J. Erickson, 'The Soviet Union at War (1941-1945): An Essay on Sources and Studies', Soviet Studies, Vol.XIV No.3, January, 1963, pp.272-274.

The post-Khrushchev period came nearer than ever to an understanding of elusive surprise attack. On top of its problems, the military now faced the problems posed by the Cuban Missiles Crisis of 1962.⁵⁵ The gravity of this experience added sobriety and urgency to military thinking. The need for accurate answers to acute problems of the present inevitably had a salutary influence on historical writing. The choice, the outline of which had already become clear, could not now be avoided. It was either not to write at all, to write on two separate levels, or to open up the discussion and link contemporary problems with past experience. The first two possibilities were not practical because they entailed a return to terror, and they would have left the military policy of the '60s' in a void. Yet the third possibility was not easy either since free discussion, open dispute and academic research necessitated more than marginal changes in the regime. The result was a compromise. The terminology, the form and the access to primary sources remained the same, but within this framework every writer, who was allowed to publish, could do as he pleased.

Stalin's image had changed considerably between 1964 and the present day.⁵⁶ In Nekrich's controversial book 22 Iyuniya, 1941, published in the summer of 1965, Stalin was cast as the arch-villain. The argument of the book, couched in high patriotic terms, was that

55. M. Tatu, op.cit., pp.316-319. When Khrushchev position was weakened after the 'missile crisis' he had to turn on the writers and further constrain the remnants of the 'thaw' of 1954-1955.

56. 'Voenachalniki vspominayut', VIZ No.5, 1970, pp.52-101, but especially Marshal Konev's contribution pp.70-72.

many people in industry and management had advised Stalin to take the correct course but he had snubbed them all, and had himself made the wrong decisions. Nekrich penetrates deep into the problems of Soviet industry prior to 1941. The book provides a useful 'Who's who' of Soviet designers in several branches of military industry,⁵⁷ while pointing up one of the most bedevilling problems of Soviet industry in those years - serial production:

The tank industry has great possibilities
However, the war in Europe in 1939-40 showed
that the tanks that were in serial production
were outmoded.⁵⁸

In what amounts to a combination of obituary and analysis Nekrich goes on to show the flaws in the Soviet military doctrine,⁵⁹ tracing the roots of the plot against the Soviet high command, which had originated in Heydrich's office. At best, according to Nekrich, Stalin was duped by the Germans.⁶⁰ Yet his final conclusion is:

The Soviet armed forces were not brought to a
condition of top military preparedness in the
face of the obvious threat.⁶¹

57. A.M. Nekrich, 22 Iyunya, 1941, Moscow, Nauka, 1965, pp.73-75.

58. Ibid., op.cit., p.75.

59. Ibid., pp.79-88.

60. Ibid., pp.121, 126-127.

61. Ibid., p.162; see also, V. Petrov, 'June 22, 1941' Soviet Historians and the German Invasion Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1968, pp.250-261. 'A meeting of the Division of History of the Great Patriotic War of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CC CPSU, February 16, 1966.' During the discussion of Nekrich's book conflicting ideas were aired about the responsibility of Stalin, Voroshilov Budenny and Golikov for the unpreparedness of the Soviet Union in 22 June, 1941.

A conclusion both accurate and most confusing since the whole problem is - was there an 'obvious threat'? A similar impression was conveyed in I.I. Fedyuninskii's book Podnyatie po trevoge.⁶² Its argument was that the army along the borders was aware of the imminent German threat, that there were clear indications of the approaching attack, but the fear of provocation paralysed Moscow. To go lower down the scale, a similar sentiment was expressed in I.T. Starinov's book Miny zhдут svoego chasa, Moscow 1964. Colonel Starinov was chief of the obstacle and mine-laying section of the Army-Engineer Training Department in the main Engineering Directorate (GVIU) of the Red Army. Like so many others he found his way effectively blocked by high-minded Marshal Kulik.⁶³ Despite the bitter Finnish experience many in the Soviet High Command found it difficult to think in defensive terms. Defence and defeat became almost synonymous in the minds of many people in the pre-war period. Hemmed in between the ideology of the invincible Red Army and the fear of provocation, many elementary demands regarding fortification, mine-laying, distribution of ammunition, camouflage and dispersal of aircraft and airfields, were brushed aside and neglected until it was too late. To understand what had happened in 1940-41 was to expose these blunders, to find their causes, and to devise ways by which they could be avoided in a future war. Some of the post-Khrushchev writers realised that a surprise attack was not a surprise at all, in the literal meaning of the word.⁶⁴ The very fact that they linked

62. See p.25 N51.

63. P.A. Rotmistrov (Editor) Istoriya voennogo iskusstva, Moscow Voenizdat, 1963, Vol.II, p.52; see also: VIZ No.2, 1962, p.81 also: Yeremenko, op.cit., p.46.

64. See Appendix No.1.

the experience of the previous war signified their realisation of the true nature of the German surprise attack of 1941. They realised that the establishment of a system of communications - roads, telephone, telegraph, radio-stations and railways - as well as the establishment of war industry within the framework of heavy industry is a long and intricate process; that the training of the army, and re-armament, are not only capital-consuming processes, they also come into violent conflict with peace-time operation of the economy. Thus in a roundabout way Stalin's image began to take on a more human aspect.⁶⁵ Obviously he had played a far greater part in decision-making before the war, than any of his advisers and generals. Within the intrinsic anti-militarist atmosphere which was part and parcel of Communism no one man could have foreseen, let alone prepared the Soviet Union for a strategic surprise attack, unless he had been ready to pre-empt, that is to attack Germany. The whole course of Soviet history since 1917 would have had to be different for the events of 22nd June, 1941, to have been otherwise.

For these reasons particularly the post-Khrushchev writers plunged ever deeper into the history of the war. Painful episodes were revised, elaborated upon and clarified. The 'second' battle of Kiev⁶⁶ which had not been mentioned for a very long time and which was related in a vague way in Yeremenko's book: V nachale voyny, was

65. A.I. Yeremenko, Pomni voynu, Donbas, Donetsk, 1971, p.166.

66. The 'second' battle of Kiev was the result of Hitler's decision to turn south instead of striking directly at Moscow. The capture of the bridge across the Dnieper near Okuninov on 23rd August 1941 may be considered the beginning of this battle which lasted until 19th September.

presented later in a very different way in a review of that book,⁶⁷ in Bagramyan's book Gorod-voin na Dnepr, Moscow, 1965 and in K.S. Moskalenko's Na yugo zapadnoi napravlenii, Moscow 1969. Several factors accounted for these revisions. Admittedly, censorship in the late 60's was not as strict as it had been before, but basically it was the need to come to terms with contemporary political and military issues which made it necessary to reveal the whole truth about the past. Notwithstanding the many crucial issues which remained concealed, the breakthrough into a true evaluation of the past made bold ventures into the future simpler.

In his book Nad kartoi bylykh srazhenii, Moscow, 1965, General of the Army M.I. Kazakov pointed out that the Soviet high command was well aware of the deficiencies in training, and in the war industry, in December 1940. The December 1940 meeting of the military, to which not enough attention has hitherto been paid either in the West or in Soviet historiography, emerges as one of the most important assemblies of the Soviet high command.⁶⁸ For the first time since the purges veteran commanders could fully realise how few of them were still around. Many of the upstarts were pitifully lacking in experience. Commanders, military theoreticians, people in charge of combat training - all learned during the meeting that modern warfare, German-style had caught them unawares, that no matter what they might do their war machine would not be fully ready before 1942, and that they would not be given a free hand to follow their military instincts even if they

67. General of the Army V. Ivanov, Colonel K. Cheremukhin, 'O Knige "V nachale voyny" ' VIZ No.6 1965, pp.74-78.

68. See under Chapter I: Also list of participants.

could all agree on what was to be done. No doubt Stalin had known how dangerous was the proximity of the German Army to the borders, but he also knew the situation in the Red Army. Moreover like some of his generals he was spellbound by the First World War experience. They simply could not conceive of modern warfare with high-speed aircraft, swift concentration of huge armoured forces and relentless pounding of the rear. Conventional wisdom, rather than ignorance or pusillanimity, was the stumbling block which prevented any correct understanding of the nature of the approaching war in 1940-41. Therefore it is an over-simplification to divide the whole period 1944-71 into Stalin, Khrushchev and post-Khrushchev sections. Stalin and Khrushchev no doubt had great influence on the writing in their respective times, as indeed many other internal and external developments had an influence, but there was also a natural period of gestation of new ideas. Tremendous changes in the global situation forced the old rigid formulations to break up. New political-military problems called for new solutions, and bred new thinking and new ideas.

Soviet strategy for the nuclear age was discussed at great length in the book Voennaya Strategiya (Military Strategy) edited by Marshal Sokolovsky. Apart from a general history of warfare, and an attempt to show the unique nature of Soviet military doctrine, the authors criticized not only the lack of combat readiness before 1941, for which they blame Stalin, but also the mistakes in strategic conception which had been the source of so much agony not only in 1941⁶⁹ but also before the battle of Stalingrad, when Soviet strategy

69. Marshal V.D. Sokolovsky (Editor), Military Strategy, London, Frederick A. Praeger, 1963, p.155. An admission that it was a mistake to keep the Soviet forces of South-western Front on the left bank of the Dnieper in September 1941. The result was the rout near Kiev.

completely misunderstood the German operative plans. A comparison of Golikov's and Sokolovsky's description⁷⁰ of the decisions which led to the retreat to the Volga and the Battle of Stalingrad puts in sharp relief the difference between the 'Stalin version' and later ones, and indicates the long way that Soviet historiography travelled during the years 1954-63. Only on a basis as firm as that could Sokolovsky go on to describe the Soviet command structure in the nuclear age, and point to the danger of possible surprise attack in the future. This book could not have seen the light of day without the pioneering work of Galaktionov in 1942 and Rotmistrov in 1955.

In his turn Sokolovsky opened the way to many other writers who drew upon the Great Patriotic War experience in reaching conclusions about a future war. Vasilievski, Zakharov, Zavialov and Reznichenko are only a few among the many writers who made use of their predecessors' work in order to establish the foundations of a sound link between the surprise attack of 21-22 June 1941 and the idea of pre-emptive nuclear attack in the future.⁷¹ By revealing the disastrous effects of a successful surprise attack Meretskov, Sandalov, Bagramyan, Zhukov, Anfilov and others made it possible to translate the old ideas of their time - of preparedness, combat readiness, management and leadership - into the environment of modern

70. Compare Golikov, op.cit. p.62 with Sokolovsky op.cit. p.151. It is a striking example of the difference between the 'Stalin version' and Soviet outlook in the early sixties.

71. Pre-emptive nuclear attack is probably the most difficult concept in Soviet military doctrine. See Dinerstein, op.cit. pp.184-194.

warfare.⁷²

Many events of the war still await further clarification and thorough research. The understanding of the enemy both in literature and in history, leaves much to be desired. The German soldier is still dealt with in an impersonal way, as a faceless representative of a group of Fascists. In his story, 'The Last Verst' Alim Keshokov puts the following words in the mouth of one of his characters:

Soldiers have always been chivalrous, but these are not people at all, only wild animals with their fur turned inside out. To put it simply, they're Fascists.⁷³

The Germans were depicted as inhuman, cruel and fanatical, not only at the beginning, when they were pushing ever deeper into the heart of the Soviet Union, but also in the last period of the war when they were on the retreat, when columns of German prisoners became a common sight and when there were many dead and wounded Germans around. There is some compassion for the wounded:

72. Sokolovsky, op.cit., pp.308-318 about combat readiness; also pp.366-368 'possible agencies of leadership of the armed forces of the Soviet Union under modern conditions' Sokolovsky's book suggestion for a high command in war time suffers from the same duality which had characterised this institution in June 1941. See p.259, N.90. See also, V.E. Savkin, Osnovnie printsipy operativnogo iskusstva i taktiki, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1971; Yu, E. Novikov, F.D. Sverdlov, Manevr v obshchevoiskovom boyu, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1967. This is a sample of Soviet books dealing with the problem of modern warfare.

73. Oktyabr, No.3, 1968 (Quoted in Bulletin, Vol.XVIII, 1971, p.41).

It might be possible to turn these people
into humans.⁷⁴

This highly emotional attitude towards the Germans is typical of all Soviet war literature, starting from the 'science of hatred' and up to the present day. Underlining the emotional approach as manifested in literature is the political failure to come to terms with Nazism as a unique revolution which substituted a racial for the 'scientific' approach to social order, and which represented low-key uninhibited state violence as the moving force of history instead of high-key inhibited class rule. Soviet ideology ignored Nazism as a phenomenon and tackled Hitler and his movement as a brand of Fascism,⁷⁵ i.e. a degenerate form of Imperialism. Germans are almost invariably referred to in Soviet literature as 'Fascist-Germans' coming under the all-embracing Kto-kovo (who will win over whom) which covers the whole ground of the Soviet Union versus the Imperialist world from 1917 to date.

Only after Soviet historians began to attend to the German documents could they have a balanced picture of surprise attack. Russian books written before 1959, such as B.S. Telpukhovskii Velikaya Otechestvennaya Voina Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945 gg⁷⁶ made exaggerated suggestions about the size and the organisation of the

74. Oleg Smirnov, 'The Northern Crown, Moskva, 1968, Nos.11-12 (quoted in Bulletin Vol.XVIII, 1971, p.42.).

75. Marshal Stalin, op.cit. pp.15-16, for the reasons why the Germans cannot be called 'National-Socialist'. Note the irony in the dogmatic attempt at describing Imperialism as more degenerate than Nazism.

76. B.S. Telpukhovskii, Velikaya Otechestvennaya Voina Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945 gg, Moscow, Gospolitizdat, 1959.

German attack. In 1959 two captured German documents were published, one of 31st January 1941 and the other of 3rd April 1941, to be followed in the same year by several more covering the period 1 June - 2 July 1941.⁷⁷ It was only a glimpse of the rich German material, but combined with later publications⁷⁸ it sufficed to help responsible Soviet historians in their attempts at explaining the nature of surprise attack. The publication of German documents in the Soviet Union was further enhanced by the translation of the Halder Diary (Kriegstagebuch) into Russian.⁷⁹ There are now multiple references in many Soviet studies to German military writing and to original German documents.

To sum up, the failure to deal squarely with the surprise attack of 22nd June 1941 originates from the Soviet approach to the world around the borders of the Soviet Union. It touches upon the inherent contradiction which had bedevilled Soviet ideology since Lenin's time, namely that the Socialist revolution, which had been launched to put an end to war on earth, found itself up in arms from its very first days. The stronger the Soviet Union became and the more eloquently its representatives spread the message of peace, the larger grew its military budgets. As a national strategy these two

77. VIZ No.1, 1959, pp.85-93; VIZ No.3, 1959, pp.82-93.

78. V.I. Dashichev (Editor) 'Sovershenno sekretno! tolko dlya komandovaniya'. strategiya fashistskaya germaniya v voine protiv SSSR. dokumenty i materialy, Moscow, Nauka, 1967.

79. V.I. Dashichev (Editor), General Polkovnik F. Halder, Voenniy Dnevnik, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968.

genuine trends characterise Soviet policy up to the present and they have had evident implications in the role of the military in the Soviet Union. At no time could the army assert itself politically, nor was it ever given a free hand to react to danger and threats outside the framework of political prudence, caution or shortsightedness.

Nor was the failure to perceive the threat in 1941 a result of technical ineptitude. The Americans in Pearl Harbour had superior technical facilities; they actually 'knew' that an attack was on the way, as R. Wohlstetter aptly proved, but they failed to act.⁸⁰ Nor can one find a solution in Whaley's argument:

Specifically, the German attack achieved strategic (and, largely, tactical) surprise by a deliberate deception operation. ... The effect was to eliminate ambiguity, making their enemies quite certain, very decisive, and wrong.⁸¹

Neither of the above is fully acceptable although both suggest an aspect of the solution. Basically the Russians did not believe in a strategic blow that would end the war. But they were wrong in stretching their doctrine of war in stages to such an extent that at no sector of the front were there enough troops when the Germans struck. Preparing for the second stage of mobilisation, Red Army

80. R. Wohlstetter, Pearl Harbor. Warning and Decision, Stanford University Press, California, 1965.

81. Barton Whaley, Operation Barbarossa. A case study of Soviet strategic information processing before the German invasion, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, June 1969, the introduction.

troops were caught on their way to the front in various stages of preparedness, and in depths from the border-line up to three hundred kilometers or more inland. However their very movement westward suggests that there was no complete deception on a strategic scale. Their main trouble was that they were deployed in the wrong way from a tactical point of view. The conclusion that the Russians reached, when the nuclear age forced them out of their ideological-historical straightjacket, was that there was no way to prepare against a surprise attack other than to pre-empt it.⁸² This conclusion runs contrary to Soviet military philosophy of the pre-World War II period, as well as against the avowed Soviet political image. It took the crisis of the Red Army during 1941-42, and a great deal of heart-searching since Stalin's death, to reach this conclusion, and not all Soviet writers adhere to it even today.

82. Dinerstein, *op.cit.* p.11; see also: Savkin, *op.cit.* p.118. The idea that a future nuclear war may start with a surprise strike and may not last very long which Savkin develops originated by a line of argument introduced by Talenskii in November 1953 and in 1957.

CHAPTER II

DOCTRINE AND TRAINING

Soviet military doctrine rested on one fundamental concept - the primacy of the offensive. All Field Regulations during the inter-war years, namely from the Civil War to the Great Patriotic War, turned on this major theme, which with all its ramifications was conceived, amplified and sustained for eighteen years by a hard core of Soviet commanders, theoreticians and weapon designers. Many of them saw action together or on separate fronts during the First World War, the Civil War in Spain, the incidents in the Far East and the Finnish War. They established the Soviet military academies, studied and taught in them. It is not surprising that they shared many ideas. In addition, being young and revolutionary their minds were open to new ideas from other countries. Between them they formulated the Red Army doctrine. With all the tribulations of collectivisation, industrialisation and the first two Five-Year plans, the basic tenets of the Red Army did not change much after the second Field Regulations were promulgated in 1925. The dominant idea throughout remained the offensive.

Field Service Regulations 1925 (PU-25)¹ Part II, Division and Corps were worked out by a committee headed by M. Tukhachevsky, who not only had proved himself as an able commander but had also produced a book on military theory.² The quick pace of military development abroad and in the Soviet Union made it necessary to improve on past performance of the Red Army and to create a theoretical

1. Polevoi Ustav RKKA 1925 (PU-25), Moscow Gosvoenizdat, 1926.

2. M.N. Tukhachevskii, Voina Klassov, Stat'i 1919-1920 g, Otdel Voennoi Literatury pri Revoliutsionnom Voennom Sovete Respubliki, Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo, 1921.

framework for future developments. Thus, Field Service Regulations 1929 were ratified by directive No.154 of the Revvoensoviet (The Revolutionary Military Council) of June, 1929.

The Field Service Regulations of the Red Army of Workers and Peasants preserved the basic principal argument and the revolutionary spirit of manoeuvrability of the Provisional Field Regulations 1925.³

The major military theoretician who worked out these regulations was the Chief of Operations in the Red Army Staff, V.K. Triandafillov whose book, Kharakter operatsii sovremennykh armii⁴ became one of the pillars of Soviet military thought for over a decade.

Triandafillov's book saw the light of day when the military of both Western and Eastern European countries felt complacent and satisfied that the conclusion drawn from the experience of the First World War, would suffice to provide theoretical background for military operations in the future. Only few military thinkers could see the relevance of significant improvement in air-plane motors or in tank and artillery construction. Cost-effect of new weapons deterred all governments from adventurous and from what seemed at the time, unnecessary rearmament. However, the first Five Year Plan allocated enough funds to the military to keep a reasonable pace of development.

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3. Voprosy taktiki v sovetskikh voennykh trudakh 1917-1940 gg Moscow, Voenizdat, 1970, p.16. (Henceforth cited as Voprosy taktiki.)
 4. V. Triandafillov, Kharakter operatsii sovremennykh armii, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1932, Second edition, see also: Col. V. Matsulenko, 'Razviteye operativnogo iskusstva', VIZ 10, 1967, p.40.

In his book, Triandafillov systematically analysed the causes and effects of major operations of the First World War. He compared the capability of combat units during the war with that of contemporary (1928-1931) units. He evaluated in detail many components of a fighting force, taking into consideration both technical development and cost of production, use and maintenance. His contribution consists of three major points - the significance of a mass army; the prevalence of mechanisation; and the concept of the 'depth of the battlefield'.

After dealing with the political reasons, which according to him had led the Capitalist countries to the idea of a small professional army,⁵ Triandafillov went on to refute this 'naive' idea and to support the idea of a mass army (millionnie armii). A small army, even though motorised and equipped with automatic weapons cannot prowl on its own on enemy territory without the support of a large army. No single arm of the army can defeat a modern country.⁶ Triandafillov was well aware of the military dilemma which had forced the idea of a small professional army on Western European theoreticians - mass army and manoeuvrability seemed to them to be incompatible. His verdict was:

It is impossible to create better conditions for easy agile manoeuvre, wide tactical and operational campaigning skill by falling back on the ideas of a small army and an armchair war. The right way is to supply the modern mass army with better transport (automobiles, six wheel trucks and well developed railways).⁷

5. V. Triandafillov, op.cit., p.24.

6. Ibid., p.25.

7. Ibid., p.27.

The solution was full mobilisation and mechanisation. A country that could mobilise its resources, that had more personnel and better prepared commanders and soldiers in peace time, was more likely to have the upper hand in war time.

Mechanisation was the key to manoeuvrability of large armies. Triandafillov emphasised this point again and again.⁸ He summed up his views about mechanisation and motorisation of modern ^{Armies} as follows:

A Shock Army (including supplementary artillery with its crews) cannot rely on horse drawn transport. Transport must consist wholly of automobiles.⁹

Only mobile artillery, motorised infantry and special motorised units (mekhanicheskoi konnitsy) can make the difference between the pace of manoeuvre during the First World War and the pace needed for the war of the future.

Any large motorised-mechanised unit needs spacious room for efficient manoeuvre. A modern army is deployed 'in depth' with first line troops forward and considerable mechanised reserves in the rear of the field of operations. These reserves are kept ready to deal with enemy formations which broke through the first lines of defence or to reinforce the attack. Tactical units, divisions and corps must be deployed in some depth, strategic formations in even greater depth. The 'depth' of the battlefield conditions the duration of the operation - the deeper the battlefield the longer the operation.¹⁰

8. V. Triandafillov, op.cit., pp.11,15,16,19,20,92,94,113.

9. Ibid., p.150.

10. Ibid., p.108.

According to Triandafillov, a mass army is absolutely necessary for modern warfare, it must be motorised and mechanised to make it manoeuvrable and it can operate effectively only if it is deployed in depth, i.e. if it is echeloned,¹¹ both on the attack and in defence.¹²

Triandafillov never denied the uniqueness of the Red Army and never doubted the ultimate victory of Socialism, but on the other hand, he never thought in terms of an 'heroic army'. Morale - political preparedness, unswerving desire for battle and devotion are inevitable for success in battle and for victory in war, but:

A modern mass army cannot consist of one hundred per cent of heroes.¹³

The average soldier is the true representative of a mass army.

Triandafillov did not leave one stone unturned. He dealt with small automatic arms of the infantry and with heavy pieces of artillery, with cavalry and tanks as well as with chemical warfare, air-force, signalling, command and control and last but not least, the cost effect of the military machine both in peace time and in war time.

Many of the ideas expressed in the Regulations and in Triandafillov's book could not be applied at the time. Soviet

11. V. Triandafillov, op.cit., p.34.

12. Ibid., p.120.

13. Ibid., p.80.

industry had just recovered from the war and its aftermath and was producing at about the level of its 1913 output.¹⁴ There were no armoured forces to speak of and no logistical transport. Altogether there were only seven thousand guns of all calibres in the armed forces.¹⁵ Advanced concepts about deep thrust could not be applied for many years after 1929.

On December 30, 1929, a special commission headed by the Director of Mechanisation and Motorisation of the Red Army, I.A. Khalepski, and Defence Industrial Representative D.F. Budniak, set out on a tour of Europe and the U.S.A. They inspected the available armoured vehicles under development or in the process of testing, which might be considered adequate for the new tactical roles envisaged by the Red Army. In the U.S.A. they were greatly impressed by the new wheel/track design built by J.W. Christie.

Of the nine first produced Christie M1931, designated Medium Tank T-3 by the US Army, two were bought by the Russians.¹⁶

After extensive tests, the first model, designated by the Russians, BT-1, commenced production on 23rd May, 1931.

This first model, soon to be followed by a long line leading up to the T-34, had a crew of 3, a weight of 10.2 tons, a maximum

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14. L. Schapiro, The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Eyre and Spottiswoode, London 1960, p.450. See also: Anatole G. Mazour, Soviet Economic Development, D. Van Nostrand Co. Inc. Princeton, N.J., 1967, p.125: also: W.W. Rostow, The Stages of Economic Growth, Cambridge, at the University Press, 1971, (2nd ed.) p.94.
 15. Maj. Gen. N.E. Nosovskii, 'Nadyezhnyi arsenal vooruzheniya', VIZ No.10, 1970, p.118: also IVOV, 1960 Vo.I, p.90 for number of guns and tanks.
 16. J.F. Milson, 'Russian BT Series', Profile AFV Weapons, no pagination. The first soviet tank was actually produced on 31/8/1920 and was called 'Tvoretz za svobodu Tov. Lenin', see P. Rotmistrov, 'Moshchnaya udarnaya sila', Krasnaya Zvezda, 10 September, 1972, p.2.

speed on wheels of 69 mph, and on tracks of 39 mph. It had two 7.62 mm. machineguns and its armour was 13 mm. for its cylindrical turret but only 6-10 mms. on the rear, the floor and the roof. Later, it was upgunned with a 76.2 mm. L.126 gun and two 7.62 mm. machineguns, and its petrol engine was replaced by a 12 cylinder V engine. Its armour, although increased, was still poor. The main advantage of the first model BT-1, BT-3 and BT-4 was their speed. This quality fitted very well into the tactical ideas expressed in Soviet theoretical works in the thirties. Thus, S.H. Ammosov in his book Taktika motomekhsyedinyenii (The tactics of motor-mechanised unities) which was published in 1932, evaluated the characteristics of the motor-mechanised unities as follows:

- great operative mobility, mainly on good roads and in good weather conditions.
- high speed¹⁷

Early in the 1930s, Soviet industry could not supply the transport necessary for the logistics of modern armoured force. In an article Role mekhanizatsiya v sovremennoi operatsii, published in 1933 in Mekhanizatsiya i motorizatsiya RKKA, V. Favitskii calculated:

for 300 Vickers tanks, 75 one ton lorries are needed to carry 75 tons of fuel, lubricating oil and containers.¹⁸

Yet the Red Army High Command was already talking in terms of

17. Voprosy strategii i operativnogo iskusstva v sovetskikh voennykh trudakh 1917-1940, Voenizdat, Moscow 1965, p.590.

[Henceforth cited as Voprosy strategii.]

18. Voprosy strategii, pp.608-609.

thousands of tanks and airplanes:

Thus, if during 1930-31, the aircraft industry produced an average of 860 planes a year and the tank industry 740 tanks a year, during 1932-33 they produced respectively about 2,600 planes and 2,770 tanks.¹⁹

The idea of a mass army was another cardinal component in Soviet military doctrine as it emerged during the thirties.²⁰ The concepts of the 'revolutionary-class nature of war',²¹ and of a class-based army combined with the emphasis put by Soviet military doctrine on the unique manoeuvrability of the Red Army and its offensive spirit, to present a new set of problems. In 1934 the Red Army cadre forces increased to 940,000.²² Its social structure had changed too and the

percentage of workers in the Red Army rose from 31.2% on 1st January 1930, to 43% in 1933 and to 45.8% on 1st January 1934. Also during the same period, the percentage of Communist Party and Komsomol members rose from 34.3 to 49.5%, so that, by January 1934, approximately half the rank-and-file of the Red Army were officially Communists.²³

After this impressive increase the Red Army became for all practical

19. Marshal Zakharov, 'O teorii glubokoi operatsii, VIZ, No.10, 1970 p.11. Also: 50 let Vooruzhennikh Sil SSSR, Moscow; Voenizdat, 1968, p.183.

20. V. Triandafillov, op.cit., pp.24-26.

21. E.A. Shilovskii, 'Nachalniy period voyny', Voprosy strategii, p.500.

22. J. Erickson, The Soviet High Command, Macmillan, 1962, p.372.

23. J. Erickson, op.cit., p.373.

purposes a 'national army', whereas formerly it had been a revolutionary-class army. Its increasing size and complexity of armament made it difficult for the High Command to marry mass-army with high speed manoeuvres and a complex diversity of armament with a simple notion of attack.

These problems were tackled in the years 1934-36. The growth of the Red Army and the development of military industry called for organisational and structural changes, and for a new Field Service Regulations which were ratified by the People's Commissar of Defence Voroshilov on 30th December, 1936. The main concept of these Regulations (PU-36) was the glubokoi boi 'operation in depth'. PU-36 stated:

Contemporary technical means of warfare, mainly tanks, artillery, air-force and motorised troops in great masses, make it possible to organise simultaneous attacks on all the battle formations in all the depth of the enemy's deployment, in order to isolate, surround and destroy it.²⁴

The 'operation in depth' was the logical theoretical consequence of Soviet military thinking. In his book Kharakter operatsii sovremenikh armii V.K. Triandafillov envisaged that:

..... a shock army consisting of 4-5 infantry corps needs up to 4-5 artillery divisions (16-20 artillery regiments), supplementary artillery and up to 8-12 tank battalions.

24. Vremennyi Polevoi Ustav RKKA 1936 (PU-36), Gosvoenizdat, Moscow 1937, p.63; see also: Voprosy Taktiki v Sovietskikh Voennykh Trudokh 1917-1940, p.18.

AA defence of such a mass of troops
 needs no less than 4-5 fighter squadrons ...
 1-2 AA artillery divisions are considered
 necessary to defend each point (transport
 parks, airfields, bridges, etc.),
 a minimum of one heavy bridge for each shock
 corps. 2-3 air force brigades
 (light and heavy bombers) Finally
 the shock army, of course, has powerful
 chemical means of warfare.²⁵

In this advanced book (although the first volume was published in 1929, and the second in 1932 posthumously), there were many components of the concepts of the 'operation in depth' and of the balanced co-ordination between the services, or interaction of all arms. Triandafillov dealt squarely with the 'Art of War', describing in military idioms the hardships which would face modern armies in future wars. His ideas were not shared by all. Many adherents of revolutionary-class army - and in 1933, according to Voroshilov - '.... 96.7 per cent of the divisional and regimental commanders were Civil War veterans'²⁶ could not accept such an 'old-fashioned'²⁷ approach.

Presenting PU-36, Tukhachevsky said the following:

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25. V. Triandafillov, op.cit., pp.92-94, for comparison see J.F.C. Fuller The Reformation of War, Hutchison & Co. London 1923, Ch. VI, p.120, Ch. VIII, pp.153, 157-59, 161-63.
26. J. Erickson, op.cit., p.374.
27. The champions of the revolutionary-class army looked down on the professional soldiers and considered the militarist approach old-fashioned. For the roots of this attitude and the disputes accompanying the shaping of the Red Army, see E.H. Carr, Socialism in One Country 1924-26, Penguin 1970, Vol.2, pp.410-415, see also: J. Erickson, Some Military and Political Aspects of the 'Militia Army' controversy 1919-1920. Waverley Papers: Series 'Soviet Military Studies', January 1972.

When Comrade Triandafillov published his book *Kharakter operatsii sovremennykh armii*, many Comrades, adherents of this theory (the theory about the unique manoeuvrability of the Red Army, AS) attacked him bitterly. He was accused of preaching positional warfare. The supporters of this theory saw in the new man (*Chelovek*), the Soviet worker, the *Kolkhoznik*, all that was necessary to conduct a war of manoeuvres. ... There were comrades, for instance, who believed that the Red Army's soldiers needed less artillery softening before an attack than soldiers of the Capitalist countries and they based this notion on the moral advantage of the Red soldier.²⁸

He went on to say that such an approach might lead to many unnecessary casualties and failures and that it contradicted Voroshilov's statement that the Red Army should:

learn how to win victory with little bloodshed.
(*Maloi kroviu*)²⁹

The Field Service Regulations 1936 had already struggled with the idea of mass-army versus professional army, but the problem was not resolved for many years. One source of inspiration for Soviet military theoreticians was J.F.C. Fuller.³⁰ They grappled with his pioneering ideas in the field of armoured forces. Yet, while accepting his basic principles about modern motorised mechanised

28. M.N. Tukhachevskii, *Izbranie proizvedeniya*, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1964, Vol.2, p.246.

29. *Ibid.*

30. In particular his following works: J.F.C. Fuller, *Tanks in the Great War, 1914-1918*, London, John Murray, 1920, 'A prospect of what tanks may do', pp.308-312; *The Reformation of War*, London, Hutchinson & Co., 1923, Ch.IV, 'The weapon of the Future', p.120; *The Foundation of the Science of War*, Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1926.

warfare, they developed their own ideas about mass-army and the role of infantry on the modern battlefield:

The conditions under which the bourgeois military theory had developed forced Fuller to abandon the mass character and to shift to the theory of small professional armies, for which the problem of attack is raised in entirely different sectors. This theory reflecting the class character of the Imperialist system is in evident contradiction to the reality of preparation for the future war. Fuller does not consider that the battle in depth is carried by a combination of the branches of the army. For us, operation in depth comprises combination of branches of the army. Hence, Fuller's point of view that a combination of tanks and infantry is like harnessing a tractor with a dray-horse is altogether unacceptable. Infantry has never been considered by us as a dray-horse, and even in contemporary offensive order of battle, it has maintained its significance as a basic factor.³¹

Throughout the thirties a fierce dispute was in progress concerning the role of the motorised-mechanised units and the role of the tank in particular. In 1932, S.H. Ammosov wrote that:

Mechanised units are little suited for battle in closed and broken terrain; without amphibious tanks they are incapable of forcing rivers on their own.³²

and that the basic characteristics of the motor-mechanised units is the following:

- great operative mobility, mainly on good roads and in good weather conditions.³³

31. G.S. Isserson, 'Istoricheski korni glubokoi taktiki' Voprosy taktiki, pp.75-76.

32. Voprosy strategii p.590, also Ibid., p.760, note No.142.

33. Ibid., p.590.



Since 1932, the number of tanks in the Red Army had increased considerably and their performance improved.³⁴ The tank was assuming a much larger role than had been assigned to it formerly and it proved capable of fulfilling its tasks. According to Tukhachevsky:

The tanks operate very well in Summer time and in Winter time, in Spring time and in Autumn.³⁵

The argument about co-ordination of infantry and mechanised forces, the role of the tank, the offensive spirit and the operation in depth was far from resolution when the men and their ideas were brutally eliminated during the 1936-38 purges of the military. Not only were people shot, banished, degraded and humiliated, but their ideas were defamed and denigrated.

The complicated situation at the end of the thirties proved harmful to the development of our theoretical-military thinking. The fundamental propositions of the theory concerning the use of mechanised troops in such operations were put in doubt, as those commanders of military cadres who took part in working out these ideas were repressed and called enemies of the people.³⁶

No matter what reasons Stalin had for slaughtering his best commanders when wars in Europe and in the Far East were more than a

34. At the beginning of the thirties the Russians started the production of the light tank MS-1 and the BT series. During the first 5-Year Plan the Red Army received 5,000 tanks. See M. Zakharov, 'Kommunisticheskaya partiya i tekhnicheskoe perevooruzhenie armii i flota v gody predvoennykh pyatiletok' *VIZ*, 2, 1971, p.7.

35. M.N. Tukhachevskii, *op.cit.*, Vol.2, p.247, but see *PU-36* pp.128-131, for the roles assigned to infantry and tanks in forcing water obstacles.

36. *Voprosy strategii* p.22, see also: P.A. Rotmistrov (Editor), *Istoriya voennogo iskusstva*, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1963, Vol.II, p.49.

mere possibility, the Red Army was badly damaged.³⁷ It would be an exaggeration to claim that Soviet military thinking came to a standstill during or after the purges, but with three out of five Marshals, eleven Deputy Commissars for defence, thirteen army commanders, 55 out of 85 corps commanders, 110 out of 195 divisions commanders³⁸ shot or vanished, the continuity, the unity and the quality of the ideas became doubtful. Nor did the axe stop at the soldier: many designers and administrators in the armament industry were disgraced, or arrested or simply vanished.

The same decade 1930-40 witnessed the ascendancy of Japan as a major Pacific power and of Germany as a major Continental power. Throughout the thirties, including the period of the Yezhovshchina, the Soviet Union was kept busy with extensive fortifications in the Far East, intervention in the Civil War in Spain and a huge industrialisation and armament programme. By that time the BT tanks had undergone many improvements. The BT-7(V) model was fitted with a conical turret with frame aerial and 15 mm. armour. The hull front armour was also increased from 13 to 22 mm. The armour components of the hull and turret which had formerly been riveted were now electro-welded. The BT-7-2 was the first to have the twin-horn periscopes. Its armament was a 45 mm. M-1932 gun with a muzzle velocity of 2350 fps. and a 7.62 mm. machinegun. A supporting artillery version of the BT-7 mounted 76.2 mm. guns. The BT-5 tanks were sent to Spain

37. For an account of the military purges see J. Erickson, op.cit., pp.449-74; M. Mackintosh, Juggernaut, Secker and Warburg, 1967 p.93.; L. Schapiro, op.cit., pp.419-21; R. Conquest, The Great Terror, Macmillan 1968, pp.201-236.

38. J. Erickson, op.cit., p.505.

as part of the Soviet military aid to the Republicans. These were 11 ton high-speed, wheel and track tanks (bistrokhodnyi, kolesnogusenichnie tankii). Although they had no radio transmitter-receivers, they were equipped with periscopes and an aiming optical device.³⁹ The appearance of tanks on the battlefield was decisive on occasion, but only in small sectors of the front.⁴⁰ Moreover, since tanks were sent to Spain piecemeal, they could never tip the balance of the whole front and their influence on the Republican side was further diminished the more that tanks and anti-tank artillery appeared on the Nationalist side.

Some Russian tanks were seen in action as early as 24th October,⁴¹ 1936, but not until 29th October did several tanks take part in an organised attack and made a real impact on a section of the front near Madrid. They were all driven by Russians under the command of General D.G. Pavlov, but since the infantry of the 5th Regiment could not keep pace, the tanks could neither develop the attack nor exploit their success.

39. Lieutenant-General A.A. Vetrov, 'Dobrovoltsy svobody', Voprosy istorii, No.4, 1972, pp.108, 113.

40. Hugh Thomas, The Spanish Civil War, Penguin Books, 1971, p.401. See also: Meretskov, op.cit., p.135, also Meretskov, 'Pod Gvadalakharoi', VIZ 7, 1967, p.55n, see also: Voina i Revolutsiya v Ispanii 1936-39. Moscow, Izdatel'stvo 'Progress', 1968, Vol.1, p.505.

41. Hugh Thomas, op.cit., p.401n.

Quite a few prominent Soviet advisors⁴² were sent to help the Republicans in Spain, but they did not have an immediate and overall influence on the conduct of the war⁴³ nor were they sure themselves how the war should be waged:

What are we going to face? How best are we to conduct war against the enemy? Should we mass all the regiments in one long-range group, (DD), or should we disperse the tanks in small groups for infantry close support (NPP)? What sort of tanks does the enemy have and what should we expect from its anti-tank artillery?⁴⁴

Altogether from October 1936 up to March 1938, 731 tanks, 703 guns and 234 aircraft were sent from the Soviet Union to Spain.⁴⁵ Spread over 17 months these tanks, guns and aeroplanes could not change the nature of the war. The Spanish Civil War could not be considered modern warfare but was waged rather more on the lines of the First World War (apart from massive air-raids) and the Republican Army including the International Brigades could not be considered a modern mechanised army.

However, many lessons were learned during this war about the effects of mass bombardment on civil population and about the psychology

42. The most prominent Soviet military advisors were: N.G. Kuznetsov, K.A. Meretskov, N.N. Voronov, G.M. Shtern, Ya.V. Smushkevich, D.G. Pavlov, R.Ya. Malinovskii, P.I. Batov, V.Ya. Kolpachki, A.I. Rodimtsev, N.P. Gur'ev, VA. Alafuzov, N.A. Klich, W. Kopets, S.M. Krivoshein.

43. Meretskov, *op.cit.*, p.136. 'During the meeting the problems of co-ordination between the Republican's military leaders, and the Soviet advisers has cropped up again (as it has on who knows how many times before)'.

44. A.A. Vetrov, 'Dobrovoltsy svobody', *Voprosy Istorii*, No.4, 1972, p.109.

45. Hugh Thomas, *op.cit.*, p.803.

of combatant and non-combatant.

In the war, apart from strategy, tanks and territory there is the problem of psychology. I remember the painful day when the Fascists occupied Toledo. On this day the Republicans not only lost a provincial city but also their faith in victory.⁴⁶

Whether or not the Soviet military had learned the problems of morale, they were evidently aware of the poor state of their equipment both quantitatively and qualitatively, on the ground and in the air.

When Meretskov arrived in Spain in October 1936, as one of the chief advisers to the Republican military command, he received a report from Vladimir Alexandrovich Antonov Ovseenko,⁴⁷ who was then Soviet Consul General in Barcelona, to the effect that 'the Fascists have air supremacy'.⁴⁸ Repeated reports had shown that the Russian I-15 and I-16 though highly manoeuvrable were too slow and under-armed. Being no match for the German new ME-109E they could not protect the slow SB bombers. The I-16 was armed with four 7.62 mm. machine guns which were badly located on the wings and had a speed of 450 kmh. whereas the new ME-109E with a speed of 570 kmh. was armed with two 20 mm. cannons. Throughout the war in Spain, the Russians had no better planes and they had to go back to the drawing board for better designs, trying meanwhile to make the best

46. Ilya Ehrenburg, *Sobraniye Sochinenii v devyati tomakh*, Moscow; 'Khudozhestvennaya Literatura', 1966, Vol.7, p.588.

47. An old time Trotskyite: executed at the end of 1938.

48. Meretskov, *op.cit.*, p.128.

of their inferior machines.⁴⁹ The conclusions drawn from the military experience in Spain were more in line with the old school of the Russian Civil War veterans and with many of the new political workers who replaced the purges victims, than with the later ideas of the now decimated group which had centred round Tukhachevsky. In a book called Novie formy bo'rby published in 1940, G.S. Isserson, one of the survivors of the purges, wrote:

In the history of war it rarely happens that new military means have an immediately decisive influence on the nature of battle, because the art and knowledge of their use usually are not born at the time of their appearance.

When new means are applied in small quantities, they generally represent a perversion of their potential, and thus often distort the perspective of their applications in general.

During the war in Spain, there was no occasion on which mechanised forces moving through enemy lines, and even if they reached an open area, had enough space for manoeuvre.

Also, in Spain there was not enough heavy artillery to have fired in great depth.⁵⁰

An independent Soviet armoured force emerged as a consequence of a process which had started officially in 1929. On 15th July 1929, the Central Committee of the VKP(b) promulgated the decree, 'State of the defence of the country' (O sostoyanii oborony strany). Two days later (17th July 1929), following V.K. Triandafillov's report the Revvoensovet (Revolutionary Military Soviet) decided to establish experimental mechanised units. The report read in part:

49. A. Yakovlev, The Aim of a Lifetime, The story of Alexander Yakovlev, Designer of the Yak Fighter Plane, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1972, p.79.

50. Voprosy strategii p.424.

Having in mind that the new type of armament namely the armoured force, was not sufficiently studied both regarding its tactical applications (for independent operation as well as for operation in co-ordination with infantry and cavalry) and its best form of organisation, it became necessary to establish during 1929-30 a permanent experimental unit.⁵¹

In 1929 Soviet industry had not yet been in a position to produce tanks⁵² and the Red Army had altogether 200 tanks and armoured cars, mainly remnants of the First World War. There was no experience in armoured warfare, no ready-made organisational forms, certainly no trained cadres to man the would-be force. The general ideas as they were worked out in 1929 envisaged five types of tanks none of which had actually been produced: tankette, light tank (lëkhkii tank) medium tank (srednii tank) heavy tank (bolshoi, tyazhëlyi tank) and bridge tank (mostovoi tank).⁵³ The new Chief of General Staff was put in charge of the air force, navy and motorised-mechanised troops.

The first mechanised regiment was formed in 1929 to be developed in 1930 into a mechanised brigade under the command of K.V. Kalinovskii. In 1932, there was already a mechanised corps which was followed in May 1933 by another corps and 6 independent

51. 50 Let Vooruzhennykh Sil SSR, Voenizdat, Moscow 1968, p.202.

52. The early attempts to produce tanks in the Soviet Union had not borne fruits.

53. Altogether the tanks were to support cavalry and infantry in reconnaissance and in attack. Light tanks were suited for co-ordination with cavalry whereas medium and heavy tanks were to support infantry in breakthrough (TPP - Infantry support tanks) and to operate in the rear of the enemy defence after a successful attack (TDD - Long range tanks). See: PU-29 pp.57,70, 86-90.

brigades.⁵⁴ By that time Soviet industry could produce several hundred tanks annually (740 during 1930-31), T-27 tankette, T-26 and BT light tanks were produced in 1931; T-28 medium tanks were produced in 1932. The T-37 amphibious tank was also produced in 1932 and the T-35 heavy tank with five turrets was produced a year later. The mechanised corps as an independent operational unit consisted of two mechanised brigades, one rifle-machine-gun brigade and independent AA battery. Altogether it had according to regulations 500 tanks and 200 automobiles. In order to train the necessary professional cadres, the F.E. Dzerzhinsky Military-technical Academy opened in 1930 a mechanisation and motorisation faculty. In May, 1932 the M.V. Lomonosov Academy in Moscow followed suit and opened a military academy for mechanised-motorised cadres.

The 11th Mechanised Corps was posted to Leningrad and the 45th to Kiev Military District. During 1933-34, another two were formed. In 1938 these four mechanised corps were re-organised and provided with tanks. Thus the 10th Tank Corps was stationed in Leningrad, the 15th in Belo-Russia, the 25th in Kiev and the 20th in Trans-Baikal. Each corps consisted of two tank brigades and one rifle-machine-gun brigade. There were 560 tanks to each corps. In July 1939, the Supreme Military Council, in the process of improving the organisational structure of the armed forces, appointed a commission to investigate the mechanised units' organisation. The commission was headed by G.I. Kulik and among its members were

54. IVOV, 1960, Vol.I, p.96. See also: 50 Let vooruzhennykh sil SSR, p.202, also, V.D. Mostvenko, Tanki (ocherk iz istorii zarozhdeniya i razvitiya bronetankovoi tekhniki), pp.85-95.

S.M. Budenny, B.M. Shaposhnikov, S.K. Timoshenko, K.A. Meretskov, L.Z. Mekhlis, D.G. Pavlov, E.A. Shchadenko. D.G. Pavlov who was at the time the Chief of the Armoured Forces Directorate in the Red Army, based his negative opinion about the structure of the mechanised corps on his experience in Spain. G.I. Kulik supported him, but the commission decided not to abandon the formation as such. However, it was impressed on the minds of the participants that a general of some attainment who had taken an active part in the Civil War in Spain did not approve of the tanks' performance there. It remained for an experience nearer home to decide the issue. On 21 November 1939, the Supreme Military Council was called upon to evaluate the performance of the mechanised corps during the recent campaign in Belo-Russia and West Ukraine where the 15th and the 25th tank corps had taken part:

As there is no engineering and material experience in maintaining large mobile units, the efficiency of the commanding personnel in leading these units and in moving the corps in action was proved on several occasions to be defective.⁵⁵

The new generation of commanders who were hastily promoted into the vacated ranks of the purged were learning to conduct war the hard way.

The cumulative evidence based on this campaign and on past experience moved the Supreme Military Council to order the dissolution of the mechanised corps. They were replaced by motorised divisions of 275 tanks each. By May 1940, four such divisions were formed

55. V.A. Anfilov, op.cit. p.107.

(the 1st, 15th, 81st and 109th). The experience of armoured warfare in Khalkhin Gol was shelved for the time being.⁵⁶ For a whole year the old mechanised formations were in the process of dissolution while the new divisions were taking shape. The decision to dissolve the old mechanised corps had been taken only nine days before the break-out of the Finnish War. The frustration and demoralisation resulting from this war shook the Soviet leadership and precipitated a thorough re-organisation of the Red Army. Military thinking too, was invigorated after the lethargy caused by the purges.

As the Soviet military concept of the offensive developed to embrace the whole depth of the battle-field, making use of better co-ordination between the services, two other problems needed careful attention: surprise and timing. The interest in the possibilities of surprise was enhanced by improvement in technology in the means of transport and in signalling. These developments highlighted by the introduction of aircraft into military operation and by the ever-increasing use of radio in war operations, made high speed concentration and rapid blows at unexpected targets not only possible, but necessary. Fast tanks and heavy barrages of long-range, high speed and even self-propelled artillery, fascinated many military thinkers. Yet the idea of a strategic surprise attack did not seem likely to Soviet thinkers because they did not believe in the military of one country conducting war against the military of another:

56. Voprosy strategii p.22. Marshal Zakharov obviously attributes the failure in assessing the theoretical achievement of the encounters in Khalkhin-Gol to the theoretical lethargy which has followed the purges.

By and large it is not the General Staff who prepare, conduct and take responsibility for the success and failures of war, but the government of the country.⁵⁷

Consequently it was not a simple technical problem but a very complicated political one.

In view of contemporary intelligence methods it is impossible to talk about any kind of political surprise.

It is true that in our time the speed of concentration of forces has increased and it seems as though there is more advantage to be gained from surprise advancing of forces. But in return the intelligence methods of gauging enemy intentions long before the outbreak of war, have also improved.⁵⁸

The large-scale surprise concept was losing ground to more modest aspirations of local tactical surprise. The loss of interest in the surprise attack as a decisive factor led Soviet thinkers to the other extreme. PU-36 while emphasising the improvement in mobility of aviation, motorised and mechanised units demanded that Red Army units should be trained to counter any surprise attack with lightning strokes (molnienosnie udari)⁵⁹. Thus, while the Soviet military doctrine was permeated with offensive spirit, its approach to strategic surprise attack was rather defensive although even the so-called defensive posture in the Soviet doctrine was a strange mix of defensive-offensive attitudes. For instance:

57. Shaposhnikov, Mozg Armii, Moscow, Voennyi vestnik, 1927, Vol.1, p.244.

58. Ibid., Vol.III, pp.202-203.

59. M.N. Tukhachevskii, 'O novom Polevom Ustave RKKA', Voprosy taktiki p.80.

The infantry order of battle for defence.

1) To make the disposition of the attacker's reconnaissance as difficult as possible and to take advantage of his unexpected attack; at the same time to use the opportunity to ascertain the deployment of the attacker and the direction of the main blow in order to prepare for counter-activity.

2) To deploy the defence units in the chosen battle-zone in such a way that the attacking enemy will break under fire and under the counter-attack of the units of this zone.

3) To maintain reserves for counter-attack.⁶⁰

The concept of surprise was closely connected with the problem of the timing of the first period of the war and its general duration. The Russians did not believe in one decisive surprise blow which might crush the enemy, and consequently they did not accept the idea of a short war.

A short war is advantageous for the bourgeoisie as it allows the bourgeoisie to have a war-time army better equipped than in a long war.⁶¹

The Russians could draw on their own experience of 1812. Did not they see the Grand Armée melting away on the vast plains, under severe weather conditions in face of tenacious, even though scattered opposition? These arguments, based on the vastness of Russia and on the mass-army versus the professional army, dispensed with the idea of a short war. The end of the war was postponed indefinitely pending an intricate series of political, diplomatic, economic and

60. N.A. Morozov, 'Oboronitel'nie deistviya pekhoty'; Voprosy taktiki, p.156.

61. V.A. Anfilov, op.cit., p.157.

military skirmishes, but the problem of the first period of the war remained unresolved.

After 1939 the Russians had to face many surprises in Poland, Finland and ultimately, France. A weakened Red Army, as it emerged after the purges, was facing a present ally but a possible enemy which was using exactly the strategy of surprise which had been repudiated by the Soviet High Command. The Germans employed in Western Europe the same methods of mass mechanised formations which had just been discarded as impractical by the Supreme Military Council on 21 November 1939. With the important lessons of Khalkhin-Gol,⁶² where the Russians themselves used a mass of air and armoured forces, fading quickly out of memory, the German Blitzkrieg in Poland and the questionable Russian performance in Finland brought the precarious state of the Red Army into sharp relief. After 1937 not only the continuity of thought was affected, but many ingenious solutions to problems of large mechanised units and of inter-service co-ordination were falling out of favour. The German success with modern methods of warfare and the Russian failure to apply these methods in Finland made way for the vast re-organisation following the Finnish War. The tank as a major component of mechanised warfare was again the centre of attention. However not all were of one mind concerning the role of the tank and its independence on the battlefield:

62. For a retrospective explanation of the failure to assess the Far East operations see S. Daskov, Review of I.I. Kuznetsov, 'Podvigi geroev Khalkhin-Gola', Ulan-Ude, Buryalskoye knizhnoye izdatel'stva, 1969, VIZ, 8, 1970 p.81.

An unsupported tank attack on a still solid defence, no matter how many tank echelons there might be, does not promise success. In Finland, for instance, in the Karelian Isthmus, in order to get better co-ordination between attacking infantry and tanks, to each tank was attached a platoon of infantry; the tanks commander and the infantry commander knew each other personally. The tanks had numbers marked on them which were known to the infantry platoon attacking with them.⁶³

The intimate links between man and machine were well-established in the mind of Soviet military writers. However, the offensive concept was still infantry orientated. On the one hand we find that:

In this movement the forward artillery salvos depended on the attacking pace of the infantry.⁶⁴

and on the other we learn that:

It is impossible now to talk about close co-ordination with infantry alone. That is not enough anymore, the tank has outgrown this stage and is now aspiring to greater heights ... At the present stage we justify demand from tank units both co-ordination with infantry and independent activity.⁶⁵

Theoretical thinking was apparently reviving but the gap between tactical concepts and industrial technological application was still very wide.

The plan for 1940 was to produce 600 T-34 tanks but only 115 were produced.⁶⁶

Nor was the situation better in small arms, artillery, or aircraft

63. P.A. Rotmistrov, 'Proryv sil'no ukreplennykh polos i ukreplennykh rayonov strelkovym korpusom' Voprosy taktiki p.296.

64. Ibid., p.298.

65. I.P. Sukhov, 'Tanki v sovremennoi voine', Voprosy strategii p.613.

66. V.A. Anfilov, op.cit., p.94.

industry, all of which were facing grave modernisation problems regarding the shift from manual to serial production.⁶⁷ Military writers, who supported the idea of independent tank formations were well aware of the lack of means to accomplish full infantry-mechanised co-ordination.

The operative independence of tank-units is gaining ground but it is not yet finally resolved. It will be finally resolved when the infantry, supported by tanks, or even only a unit which is to work in close co-ordination with tank units, will be carried by all-terrain transport (better by caterpillar), and when everything needed to supply the tank units will also be on tracks suitable for fast movement in places where tanks move.⁶⁸

The lessons of Finland were learned at a speed measured by the German success in the War. The training of the Red Army, its morale and discipline all called for immediate and rigorous attention. The Supreme Military Council which met in April 1940, to discuss the Finnish War took several measures to redress the pitiable shape of the Armed Forces. In less than a month, Voroshilov was relieved of his post and was replaced by Timoshenko, who became Defence Commissar on 8th May. Just over a week later, on 16th May, order No.120 saw the light of day. It listed the shortcomings that had been revealed during the Finnish War and would have to be corrected. However, the soldiers who had taken part in the campaign, rank and file, were showered with medals and promotions.⁶⁹

67. N.E. Nosovsky, 'Nadezhni arsenal vooruzheniya' Voprosy istorii, No.11, 1970, p.121.

68. I.P. Sukhov, 'Tanki v sovremennoi voine' Voprosy strategii p.613.

69. Meretskov, op.cit., p.190.

On the 7th May 1940, the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet introduced the following high ranks: the commanders of all arms - Major-General, Lieutenant-General, Colonel-General, General of the Army, and ratified the previously established rank of Marshal.⁷⁰

Order No.160 of 16th May summed up the principles of the new training programme for the Red Army. Combat training was to attain the maximum approximation to combat conditions and requirements.⁷¹ During that period, a commission headed by V.N. Kordiumov was appointed in the Commissariat of Defence to work out the new draft of Field Service Regulations 1939 which would include the latest achievements in military equipment in the Red Army and the experience of the Soviet-Finnish War and that of the German-Polish campaign. Bodenny who was released from his command of Moscow MD was appointed to supervise the work of this commission.⁷² This draft was circulating in the Army, the military academies, technical schools and administration of regions and central institutions.⁷³ Though it was not ratified officially, it served for all intents and purposes as the official Field Service Regulations until after the beginning of the war. Being exposed to the diversity of opinions at the time and to influence of current events, it was indeed difficult to agree upon the right direction in training and discipline of the Soviet Armed Forces. On 12 October, a new Disciplinary Code replaced the old code of 1925. Its provisions were remarkable in a socialist state: the commander's

70. Major-General N. Bobkov, 'K istorii voenskikh zvanii v sovetskikh vooruzhennykh silakh', VIZ No.9, 1970, p.88.

71. J. Erickson, op.cit., p.554.

72. Voprosy taktiki p.21.

73. Ibid., p.21.

orders had to be carried out unquestioningly; there were severe punishments for insubordination; and an obligatory salute symbolised the new, harsh discipline.⁷⁴ 'Commanders were authorised to use force and firearms to ensure compliance with an order, even in peace-time'.⁷⁵ A further move towards bolstering the authority of the commanding personnel was taken on 12th August 1940, when the office of political Commissar was abolished and a unified command restored. Following this, and the decree concerning ranks of high commanders, it was necessary to enhance the status of lower rank commanders too:

In order to promote the junior personnel's responsibility, to create conditions of military preparedness in the units, to educate and train the soldiers and also to raise their authority, the following ranks were established in November 1940: Junior Sergeant, Sergeant, Senior Sergeant, Starshina. (Chief Petty Officer, First Sergeant). The same Prikaz introduced ranks for orderlies too - Red - Soldier and Efretor - Private First Class.⁷⁶

Salaries of commanders were substantially raised, though part of the increase was cancelled out by inflation.⁷⁷ Thus the army was recovering from the consequences of the purges, but with the growing danger of war which had become acute after the shattering collapse of

74. Roman Kolkowicz, op.cit., p.63.

75. M. Mackintosh, op.cit., p.127.

76. Major-General N. Bobkov, 'K istorii voinskiikh zvanii v sovetskikh vooruzhenykh silakh' VIZ No.9, 1970, p.88.

77. M. Fainsod, How Russia is Ruled, Harvard Univ. Press, 1963, Revised Ed. p.479.

France the all-important problem of preparing the Armed Forces for the beginning of hostilities acquired gigantic dimensions. Throughout 1940, the armed forces were trained according to the new training programme using real ammunition, which was not in abundance, for small arms, as well as for artillery.

Timoshenko and Meretskov (who replaced Shaposhnikov as Chief of General Staff in August 1940) were personally supervising the training and manoeuvres. Yet in the designing of new rifles, guns, airplanes, tanks and ships, and in their applications many problems remained unresolved. In 1933, E.A. Shilovskii wrote an article, 'Nachalnyi period voyny', published in Voina i Revolutsia, October 1933, in which he drew attention to the elusive first period of the war:

It is desirable to carry the battle on to enemy territory, but it should be remembered that the cavalry, the mechanised units and aviation will be necessary in the decisive combat. Therefore, they should not be exhausted during the first period.⁷⁸

Shilovskii indicated that he did not consider the first period of the war as a decisive one; furthermore he conveyed the idea of war in stages in which there would be time for concentration on both sides. This idea was later challenged on all accounts:

Forestalling the Enemy's concentration always gives the High Command the possibility to take the operative-strategic initiative at the very beginning of the war.⁷⁹

78. Voprosy strategii, p.500.

79. Ibid., p.488.

Although it would be still difficult to prepare for future wars, it would be easier to define their first period:

The din of dropping bombs and the noise of tanks will be the declaration of war in the future.⁸⁰

The same argument was used by G.S. Isserson:

The proposition that such an attack (stunning neutralising attack - oglushitel'nogo podavlyaushchego udar. AS), was launched at the first hours of the war, does not apply any more; on the contrary, the first hours of the war occurred because such an attack was launched.⁸¹

This argument seemed to have settled the problem concerning the actual commencement of hostilities, but it did not do away with the other, not less important one, of how to identify the threat of an enemy and of how to prepare against such an eventuality.⁸²

But from the threat of war to the real breakout of war, there is always one more pace. Concentration acquired subtle character. It is generally impossible to define its beginning. Its sequel is always in doubt - is it really a preparation for armed onslaught?⁸³

Thus, by the end of 1940, the Red Army had regained some of the ground lost because of the purges but the speed of events, and the

80. S.N. Krasil'nikov, 'Nachalnyi period budushchi voini' Pravda, 20 May, 1936.

81. G.S. Isserson, 'Novie formy bor'by', Voprosy strategii p.427.

82. VIZ No.3, 1965, p.50.

83. G.S. Isserson, 'Novie formy bor'by', Voprosy strategii pp.427-428.

complexity of the political-military situation facing the Soviet Union by the end of 1940 left many problems unsolved.

In the middle of November 1940, the Russo-German diplomatic dialogue came to a standstill. Having spent several heated but futile hours with Hitler and Ribbentrop, Molotov returned to Moscow empty-handed. There was no visible change in Soviet policy towards Germany or any other country after November 1940. The army was carrying on its routine, as it had been established after the Finnish War, that is, training under conditions simulating a real battlefield. No major transfer of significant military formations was noted, even along the Western borders. If there was any Soviet apprehension in November and the first half of December 1940, it was well subdued.

By the end of November 1940, the long and complex Russo-German contest over the Balkans came to an end. On 20th November, Hungary signed the Tripartite Pact and Rumania followed suit on the 23rd. Hitler had his hands free to secure the oil of Ploesti and to dislodge the British from their last foothold on the Continent. On 9th December 1940, the British Army had started its offensive in Northern Africa, and by the end of December it was noted by Russians as well as by other diplomats and intelligence people that there were more than half-a-million German troops concentrated along the Danube, at the principle crossings.⁸⁴

Apart from the diplomatic haggling which was known to only a few and the daily training of the Army, there was the usual struggle along the borders. Hundreds of agents were captured along the

84. Gafencu, Prelude to the Russian Campaign, London, Frederick Muller Limited, 1945, p.132.

Western borders during 1940.⁸⁵ Not less irritating were enemy aircraft flying over Soviet territory. There was no call for alarm but the Commissar for Defence and the Chief of the General Staff were worried enough to call a military meeting, in December 1940, under the auspices of the Supreme Military Council (GVS).

The autumn exercises of 1940 were not altogether encouraging. High military authorities went so far as to indicate crisis in the training programme of the Red Army. Looking at the problem from a soldier's point of view, it was a confused picture. Since 1935 there were endless changes in regulations, in instructions, in command, in equipment and in discipline. The recent exercises along the Western border which were commanded by Lieutenant-General Vatutin were conducted according to the experience of the Finnish War. The soldiers were trained to break through heavily fortified lines, to overcome technical and engineering obstacles and to engage an enemy in bunkers and pillboxes. On the face of it, it was an exercise in interaction of arms using tanks, artillery and air force. It was the intention of the High Command to simulate the environment of a real battlefield for which purpose live ammunition was used by all arms. Infantry soldiers too, were firing their weapons, some of which were the new sub-machine-guns and half automatic rifles. But Timoshenko and Meretskov who were touring the training grounds were not satisfied, nor were many other commanders, notably those of the armoured forces. Sometimes the task seemed impossible, with the new ideas about

85. Lt. General V. Fedorchuk, 'Armieskie Chekisti v boyakh za rodinu', VIZ No.12, 1967, p.111. The figure 5000 captured agents seems rather exaggerated. It may refer to all trespassers.

concentration of mechanised corps clashing with the reality of the same units being dispersed or re-organised.⁸⁶ The co-ordination between tanks and infantry remained unaccomplished after the exercises, for prestige as well as for mechanical, logistical and tactical reasons. The air force too, was very slow in catching up. The trickle of new machines into the force made the old ones seem even more obsolete and unattractive for the young pilots, yet there were too few of those new models coveted and dreaded at the same time.⁸⁷ Co-ordination in the air which had been such a problem during the 'incident' in Khalkhin Gol⁸⁸ was not helped by the intrusion of the modern types of aircraft, let alone air-force land-force co-ordination. Further-more, the proportion of air-ground support aircraft to bombers made such co-ordination almost an impossible task.

At the same time, Germany was proving that it could be done. Precise co-ordination between arms, mass concentration of armoured forces, air supremacy and surprise were the pillars of the German doctrine in action. It was of commanding importance for the Soviet leadership to assess the German might after the fall of Western and Northern Europe. It was verging on recklessness to proceed with the training and the armament programmes without a theoretical summing up of the ground that had been covered so far. The only way to evaluate the achievement of the Red Army since the Finnish War was to hear

86. See Chapter IV under Armoured Forces.

87. See Chapter IV under Air Force.

88. VIZ No.9, 1969, pp.74-76.

reports of the people who were in a position to know what the army was doing. Six commanders were assigned to prepare an exhaustive report in their particular fields. The reports were ordered on 1st September and they were given a month to prepare them. Meretskov, the CGS had Vatutin and Vasilievsky to help him in compiling the gigantic amount of data; Zhukov was lucky to have Bagramyan around, with his erudition in Staff and theoretical work. The reports were diverse so as to cover every possible aspect of military activity, but the terms of reference were strict and clear-cut. The idea was to match the theoretical thinking with the current technical and tactical possibilities of the Soviet Union.

The military representatives on the whole were in their forties or younger. If they were not direct products of Soviet military education, they at least had had some period in a Soviet military academy. However, quite a few were veterans of the Civil War, and some were associated or even acquainted with the victims of the purges as well as with their ideas. On the other hand, there was a long list of younger commanders who assumed high ranks as a result of the purges but were lacking in experience, or (to use a contemporary expression) 'military culture'.⁸⁹ As they were all, at least to some extent, products of Soviet military education, they were of necessity imbued with the spirit of the offensive, and therefore likely to be impressed with ideas about initiative and carrying the battle on to enemy territory. Many of the participants were old-time acquaintances whose comradeship was forged in battle

89. M.I. Kazakov, Nad kartoi bylikh srazheniya, Moscow, Voenizdat 1965, p.57.

and in exercises, as well as in military academies which they had attended as pupils or teachers. The political undertones were contributed implicitly by fresh memories of the purges and explicitly by the presence of Party representatives and military political workers who were notorious for their part in the elimination of the older High Command.

1. THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE DECEMBER MEETING - (BY APPOINTMENT)

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Commissar of Defence | Marshal Timoshenko |
| Deputy Commissar | Marshal Kulik |
| Deputy Commissar | Marshal Shaposhnikov |
| C.G.S. | General of the Army Meretskov |
| Deputy C.G.S. | Lieutenant-General Vatutin |
| Deputy C.G.S. | Major-General A.M. Vasilevsky |

MAIN ADMINISTRATION

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Chief Armoured Forces | Lieutenant-General Ya.N. Fedorenko |
| Chief Administration of Training | Lieutenant-General V.N. Kordyumov |
| Chief of Staff Air Force | Lieutenant-General P.V. Rychagov |
| General Inspector Artillery | Lieutenant-General M.A. Parsegov |
| General Inspector Cavalry | Colonel-General O.I. Gorodovikov |
| Deputy/General Inspectorate Artillery | Major-General L.A. Govorov |
| Deputy/General Inspectorate Infantry | Lieutenant-General A.K. Smirnov |
| Chief Military Academy Frunze | Lieutenant-General M.S. Khozin |

GOC MD

| | |
|------------|-----------------------------------|
| Kiev MD | General of the Army Zhukov |
| Moscow MD | General of the Army I.V. Tulenyev |
| Western MD | Colonel-General D.G. Pavlov |

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| Kharkov MD | Lieutenant-General I.K. Smirnov |
| Leningrad MD | Lieutenant-General M.P. Kirponos |
| Trans-baikal MD | Lieutenant-General I.S. Konev |
| Central Asia MD | Lieutenant-General J.P. Apanasenko |
| Far East MD | Colonel-General G.M. Shtern |

COS MD

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| Baltic MD | Lieutenant-General P.S. Klenov |
| Kiev MD | Lieutenant-General M.A. Purkaev |
| Western MD | Major-General V.E. Klimovskii |
| Moscow MD | Lieutenant-General V.D. Sokolovsky |
| Far East MD | Major-General M.A. Kuznetsov |
| Central Asia MD | Major-General M.I. Kazakov |

Member of Military Council MD¹

Commander Air Force MD²

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Chief of Staff Artillery MD Kiev | Lieutenant-General N.D. Yakovlev ³ |
|-------------------------------------|---|

Commanders of Army:

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1st Red Banner Army | Lieutenant-General M.M. Popov |
| 6th Red Banner Army | Lieutenant-General I.N. Muzychenko |

-
1. 3 members of Military Council.
 2. 5 commanders of MD Air Force.
 3. Another 2 COS artillery.

Commander 1st Mechanised Corps Major-General P.Z. Romanenko

Commander 6th Mechanised Corps Major-General M.G. Khatskilevich⁴

Commander Infantry Division⁵

Commander Tank Division⁶

Chief of Air Defence PVO Major-General D.T. Kozlov

4. Another 3 commanders of mechanized corps.

5. 4 commanders of infantry divisions.

6. A commander of a tank division.

2. THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE DECEMBER MEETING - (BY NAMES)

| | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Marshal | Timoshenko |
| Marshal | Kulik |
| Marshal | Shaposhnikov |
| Marshal | S.M. Budenny |
| Lieutenant-General | M.A. Parsegov |
| Colonel-General | O.I. Gorodovikov |
| General of the Army | Meretskov |
| Lieutenant-General | N.F. Vatutin |
| Major-General | A.M. Vasilevsky |
| Lieutenant-General | Ya.N. Fedorenko |
| Lieutenant-General | V.N. Kordyumov |
| Lieutenant-General | P.V. Rychagov |
| Major-General | L.A. Govorov |
| Lieutenant-General | A.K. Smirnov |
| General of the Army | Zhukov |
| General of the Army | I.V. Tulenyev |
| Colonel-General | D.G. Pavlov |
| Lieutenant-General | I.K. Smirnov |
| Lieutenant-General | I.S. Konev |
| Lieutenant-General | J.P. Apanasenko |
| Colonel-General | G.M. Shtern |
| Lieutenant-General | M.S. Khozin |
| Lieutenant-General | P.S. Klenov |
| Lieutenant-General | M.A. Purkaev |
| Major-General | V.E. Klimovskii |
| Lieutenant-General | V.D. Sokolovsky |

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Major-General | M.A. Kuznetsov |
| Major-General | M.I. Kazakov |
| Lieutenant-General | N.D. Yakovlev |
| Lieutenant-General | M.M. Popov |
| Lieutenant-General | I.N. Muzychenko |
| Major-General | P.Z. Romanenko |
| Major-General | M.G. Khatskilevich |
| Major-General | D.T. Kozlov |
| Lieutenant-General | Ya.T. Cherevichenko |
| Lieutenant-General | M.G. Efremov |
| Lieutenant-General | S.A. Kalinin |
| Lieutenant-General | V.F. Gerasimenko |
| Lieutenant-General | F.N. Remizov |
| Major-General | S.S. Biryuzov |
| Major-General | P.A. Ponedelin |
| Lieutenant-General | A.A. Zhdanov |
| Lieutenant-General | F.E. Golikov |
| Lieutenant-General | A.I. Yeremenko |
| Lieutenant-General | G.P. Kravchenko |
| Lieutenant-General | M.A. Antonyuk |
| Lieutenant-General | A.V. Kurkin |
| Lieutenant-General | V.G. Vershinin |
| Lieutenant-General | T.T. Khryukin |
| Lieutenant-General | A.I. Gusev |
| Lieutenant-General | E.V. Ptukhin |

Timoshenko who opened the December 1940 meeting in his capacity as both People's Commissar of Defence and Chairman of the conference, set the tone:

How do we conceive of organising and conducting offensive and defensive operations, of using mechanised force and air force, and of organising all the work concerning the development of military theory and operative preparedness of the commanding personnel.⁹⁰

After Timoshenko's rather general opening, the conference spent the following two days, 23-25 December, listening to and discussing CGS Meretskov's report. The title of his report was: Results and Aims of the Infantry and Air Force Military Preparations, and the Operative Preparations of the Commanding Personnel. The very title indicated a critical look back at the results of the training programme since the Finnish War and an analytical look ahead. Regarding his first intention, Meretskov was in an awkward situation. He became CGS on 18 August 1940, and could not be blamed for mistakes before this period, i.e. the brunt of his criticism was carried by Timoshenko and Shaposhnikov. Moreover, Meretskov and Timoshenko did not see eye to eye regarding the role of tanks in a future war.⁹¹ On the other hand, Meretskov was vulnerable on account of the Finnish War where his general command of operations⁹² had not brought victory and his command of the 7th Army had left much to be desired. His Finnish War experience left its mark on his report. Meretskov

90. V.A. Anfilov, op.cit., p.137.

91. Meretskov, op.cit., p.195.

92. VIZ No.3, 1965, p.57.

criticised bitterly the Field Service Regulations which were circulating at the time for comment and corrections. For lack of any other regulations, these provisional and officially unratified versions were in use. To Meretskoy's mind they were old and not in line with the demands of modern war. He aimed his criticism mainly at two grave mistakes: the proportion between combat and non-combat troops in first-line units and the lop-sided balance between attack and defence. In his opinion only a third of the troops were actually committed to battle while two-thirds were kept behind as holding troops. The same mistake he observed in defence, where not enough forces and means were directed into the sector of the main enemy blow. But this mistake, according to Meretskoy was only a detail in an entirely erroneous approach to the problem of defence:

There was a time when in general people were afraid to say that defence was possible.⁹³

Meretskoy made it very clear what he thought had been the source of evil:

The war experience has proved that the present system of education and military preparation of the forces did not provide the necessary training for them. It is generally known that our army ... is educated according to the combat experience in the period of the Civil War which led to wrong ideas about the rigorous demands which are made in the course of war.⁹⁴

Drawing on his observations during the recently held

93. Meretskoy, op.cit., p.198.

94. Anfilov, op.cit., p.127.

exercises, he commented that it looked:

.... as if we reared not defenders of the Motherland, who are ready to shed their blood, but hot-house plants.⁹⁵

He went on to say that:

The troops, overcoming the advanced lines of defence not always had a clear notion what should be done in order to struggle quickly through the defensive obstacles and reach the first line of defence. During training as soon as the soldiers came up against real obstacles, it was evident that they had neither practice nor skill to overcome them. It was revealed that they did not know how to adapt to local conditions and how to use correctly the ground features in order to take cover.⁹⁶

There were other occasions when the staffs were not accurate in co-ordinating the branches of the army.

Commenting directly on what he himself experienced in the Finnish War, Meretskov said:

For some reason we have not yet defined what will be the case with mines on the battlefield.⁹⁷

Yet above all, the Chief of the General Staff wanted to impress upon his colleagues the danger of an imminent war. As if anticipating many complaints, wild suggestions and criticism, he said:

95. Meretskov, op.cit., p.198.

96. Anfilov, op.cit., p.130.

97. Ibid., p.131.

At the present, the government and the Party supply us with all that is necessary and demand that we will be in constant military preparedness against aggression. Not for one minute are we allowed to forget that we live and work at a time of war, we cannot lose even one hour, and making use of every minute we must improve our war readiness.⁹⁸

It was a shattering document. During the intervals in the following debate, Meretskoy could hear many angry comments. Obviously Timoshenko was not pleased. Meretskoy knew very well that this state of affairs was not of the Commissar's making. Timoshenko himself inherited a dispirited army, in a demoralised and chaotic organisational situation when he was appointed People's Commissar of Defence seven months before the December Meeting. Many commentators who agreed with Meretskoy's general argument remarked nevertheless that there had been many successes in training and organisation during 1940. While some disapproved of the tone of Meretskoy's report, none could dispute its conclusions, namely the need for new Field Service Regulations that would take into consideration the experience of the war in Finland and in Western Europe. Nobody argued against Meretskoy's statement that there were shortcomings in the training programme.

The second report on the agenda was read by General of the Army, Zhukov, who came to Moscow from his Military District's H.Q. in Kiev. He spoke about The nature of modern offensive operations. His main subject was the massive mechanised corps. He elaborated on the new scope of warfare as a result of motorisation and mechanisation of modern armies. Modern battle, according to Zhukov, was faster, more dynamic and achieved more decisive results. Fast development

98. Anfilov, op.cit., p.138.

was due to mass concentration of air force, tanks, motorised and airborne units. Successful development of a breakthrough, turning operative success into a strategic one was made possible by the use of modern equipment en masse. Analysing the war in Western Europe during 1939-40, he concluded that most instructive was the close co-ordination of masses of tanks and mechanised units with air force and airborne troops in operation in depth. Modern operations would succeed only if they were carried in many directions, in all the depth of the operative theatre, with strong mobile groups hitting at the flanks and rear of the enemy concentrations. In conclusion, Zhukov emphasised that the Red Army would have to face a strong and heavily equipped enemy. Of all those present at the conference, Zhukov was the only one who both approved of modern warfare and applied it in practice. The heavy losses which the victory in Khalkhin-Gol entailed left him disenchanted, but convinced.

Among those who took part in the debate after Zhukov's report, only one was conspicuous in his criticism, P.L. Romanenko, commander of 1st Mechanised Corps. Among other things, he said the following:

In my opinion this treatment (Zhukov's report) could have been right during the period 1932-34, as it reflects the standard of military thinking of that time, based on troops considerably less saturated with equipment.

The report has rightly established that the German army accomplished its attacking operations on the whole by mechanised and air force units, but it has not shown how it was accomplished.

the Germans who have less tanks than we, understand that attacking force in our time is made of mechanised, tank and air force units and they assembled all their tanks and motorised troops in a strategical formation; they massed them and assigned to them the accomplishment of independent decisive operations.⁹⁹

On the positive side of his comments, Romanenko went on to suggest a Shock Army consisting of 4-5 mechanised corps, 3-4 air corps, 1-2 paratrooper divisions, 9-12 artillery regiments. Nobody accepted this suggestion which stood in staggering contradiction to the technical and organisational capabilities of the Red Army in 1940-41.

First-hand view of the conference material proves that there were no serious disputes between the participants concerning the problem of application of mass mobile troops (motor-mechanised). In discussing the reports of G.K. Zhukov and D.G. Pavlov, there were many exchanges of opinion, but not about the principle of applying massed mobile troops. They regarded groups assigned to develop a breakthrough and their deployment and order of battle (echelons); the width of front and timing of committing the mobile group to the breakthrough; the organisation of co-ordination of mobile troops and air force, their conduct and fuel supply for tanks to enable independent activity of mechanised units in the operative depth of the enemy.¹⁰⁰

Lt. General P.S. Klenov, Chief of Staff of the Baltic Military District commented that Zhukov's report aired the basic problems of preparing and conducting offensive operations, but it did not mention the particular operations during the first period of the War.¹⁰¹

99. Yeremenko, *op.cit.*, p.36, see also: *VIZ* No.6, 1965, p.74 for comment on Romanenko's remarks.

100. *Ibid.*

101. Zhukov, *Vospominaniya i Razmishleniya*, APN Publishing House 1969, p.272.

General F.E. Golikov who basically accepted Zhukov's conception about massive mechanised units, did not agree with Romanenko's criticism that Zhukov had in mind the capabilities of the Red Army in 1932-34.

The third report, The character of modern Defensive Operations was read by General of the Army I.V. Tulenyev, who was the Commander of Moscow Military District:

General of the Army I.V. Tulenyev prepared a comprehensive report on the Nature of Modern defence, but in keeping with the instructions, he did not go beyond the limits of defence on an Army scale, and therefore, he did not discuss the nature of modern strategical defence.¹⁰²

Tulenyev's task was difficult as he had to overcome the convention and the political-theoretical aversion against defensive operations. He plotted his argument very carefully giving constant tribute to the merits of offensive operations. However he made his point that, whereas the attack was very advanced in Soviet theoretical writings, defence left much to be desired. The defence operation, he argued, whether it was dependent upon the general plan of the war, operative considerations or even some political or economical reasons might be based on strong fortifications using modern military means. An Army in defence should occupy a front of 100 km, and have a depth of 100-120 km. Every division would have to defend a line 8-12 km. in length. The defence should be organised in depth consisting of several fortified defensive lines, and the operative organisation of an army's troops should be constructed in two echelons. The defence should cater for anti-tank, anti-artillery

102. Zhukov, ibid., p.197, see also, Anfilov, op.cit., p.141.

and anti-air-raid purposes. In the depth of the fortified area, there should be forces and means to cope with tanks and air-borne units. More-over, the army must be able to commit strong forces for counter-attacks, the old defensive-offensive mix.

During the debate which had followed Tulenyev's report, Lt. General M.A. Purkayev, Chief of Staff of Kiev Military District spoke about the need for strong anti-tank defence. His solution, in part, was to use mechanised means to lay mines. Major-General V.I. Klimovskii, Chief of Staff of Western Military District aired his view about the surprise factor in defence. Lt. General Kirponas, commander of Leningrad Military District spoke about the importance of camouflage in defence. The Chief of Frunze Military Academy, M.S. Khosin maintained that the Defence with its fortifications depended upon the operative conception and could not be separated from it. Furthermore, it was impossible to make the operative conception dependent upon the environment of the fortification. He based his observation on the experience of the Russian Army in the First World War. Major-General L.A. Govorov, Deputy General Inspector of Artillery, said that defence consisted of strong tactical fire-power, of the possibilities provided by fortifications to exercise such fire and of the manoeuvres of mobile operative reserves. The most controversial point of view was expressed by Lt. General V.D. Sokolovsky, Chief of Staff of Moscow Military District. He challenged the view that the defence was centred round a geographical point. Fierce battle did not mean that not one piece of land should be given up. The defence he said, should be tactically elastic. Arranged in depth it should aim at causing as many casualties as possible, to bleed the enemy white both materially and from a morale point of view.

Lt. General P.S. Klenov praised Tulenyev for emphasising the importance of defence, in which, according to him, the Red Army was rather amateurish. No one disputed the fact that both theory and practice of defence should be furthered and that their contemporary state was not satisfactory.

Tulenyev's report was followed by Col. General D.G. Pavlov, commander of Western Military District who spoke about The Use of Mechanised Corps in Attack. Obviously Pavlov had changed his mind since November¹⁰³ 1939. He now said that the main task of tank forces was to develop the success of a breakthrough into the 'operative depth'¹⁰⁴ of the enemy. Mechanised troops en masse using their modern equipment and operating independently were a decisive factor in large operative activities. Mechanised troops would turn an operative success into a strategic one.

In the debate following Pavlov's paper, Lieutenant-General F.E. Golikov spoke about the factor of timing in committing armoured forces. In his opinion armoured forces should be involved in the breakthrough from the very first day, as otherwise they were likely to engage stronger and better prepared enemy forces. Lieutenant-General A.I. Yeremenko who agreed in principle with Zhukov's ideas about mass concentration of mechanised units¹⁰⁵ went on to discuss the co-ordination between infantry and tanks with a strong accent on the latter.

103. See p.60.

104. 'Operative depth' in Soviet military terminology means the length and width of a given battlefield usually of a front or an Army including their rear at a given time.

105. Anfilov, op.cit., p.143.

.... tanks with the support of artillery and aviation engage the enemy, and the infantry destroys it, occupies its territory and consolidates the success. In this function the tanks give close support to the infantry. Here too, they are the decisive factor in success.¹⁰⁶

Artillery had featured prominently in all the debates. The Red Army was saturated with guns at all levels.¹⁰⁷ During 1940, the training programme accentuated artillery co-ordination with infantry, concentration of fire under one centralised command and artillery fire by topographic maps and at night. But as in other sectors, here too, the training programme was based on the Finnish War experience and the Finns had neither tanks nor planes in sufficient numbers to merit special attention. However, in December there was on the conference table data collected during the war in Western and Northern Europe. The participants had a fairly accurate notion of their likely enemy and his performance. Furthermore even within the framework of the conference a discrepancy was revealed between a training programme aimed at blowing up strong fortified lines, and far-advanced ideas about masses of mechanised forces in co-ordination with huge air forces. A war of manoeuvre in attack and in defence as it had been outlined in the conference, demanded new thinking about artillery too. Lieutenant-General M.A. Parsegov, Inspector General of Artillery complained that the independent anti-aircraft units could not cope with their task of highly concentrated

106. Yeremenko, op.cit., p.39.

107. IVOV 1960, Vol.I, pp.452-453, see also: 50 Let Vooruzhennykh Sil SSSR, p.201, also: Zhukov, op.cit., pp.213-214.

fire. Marshal Kulik suggested the establishment of courses during 1941 for young AA gunners. The aim of these courses would be to achieve high speed fire.¹⁰⁸

The fifth report in the conference, The Air Force in Attack Operations and in the Struggle for Air Supremacy, was read by Lieutenant-General A.F. Rychagov. He said that the air force, like the armoured force was expecting new machines during 1941. The main task would be to master these planes, and to fit them into the training programme in combination with the older types which were still to form the bulk of the force. On the theoretical side, he made six main points. The task of the air force, he said, was the conquest of air supremacy; co-ordination between air force and land forces in the battlefield; protection of troops and regions from enemy air raids; activity of the air force as operative and strategic reserve over the troops and operative rear of the enemy; provisions for dropping paratroops; supplying troops cut off from their logistics, or who were in need for other reasons.

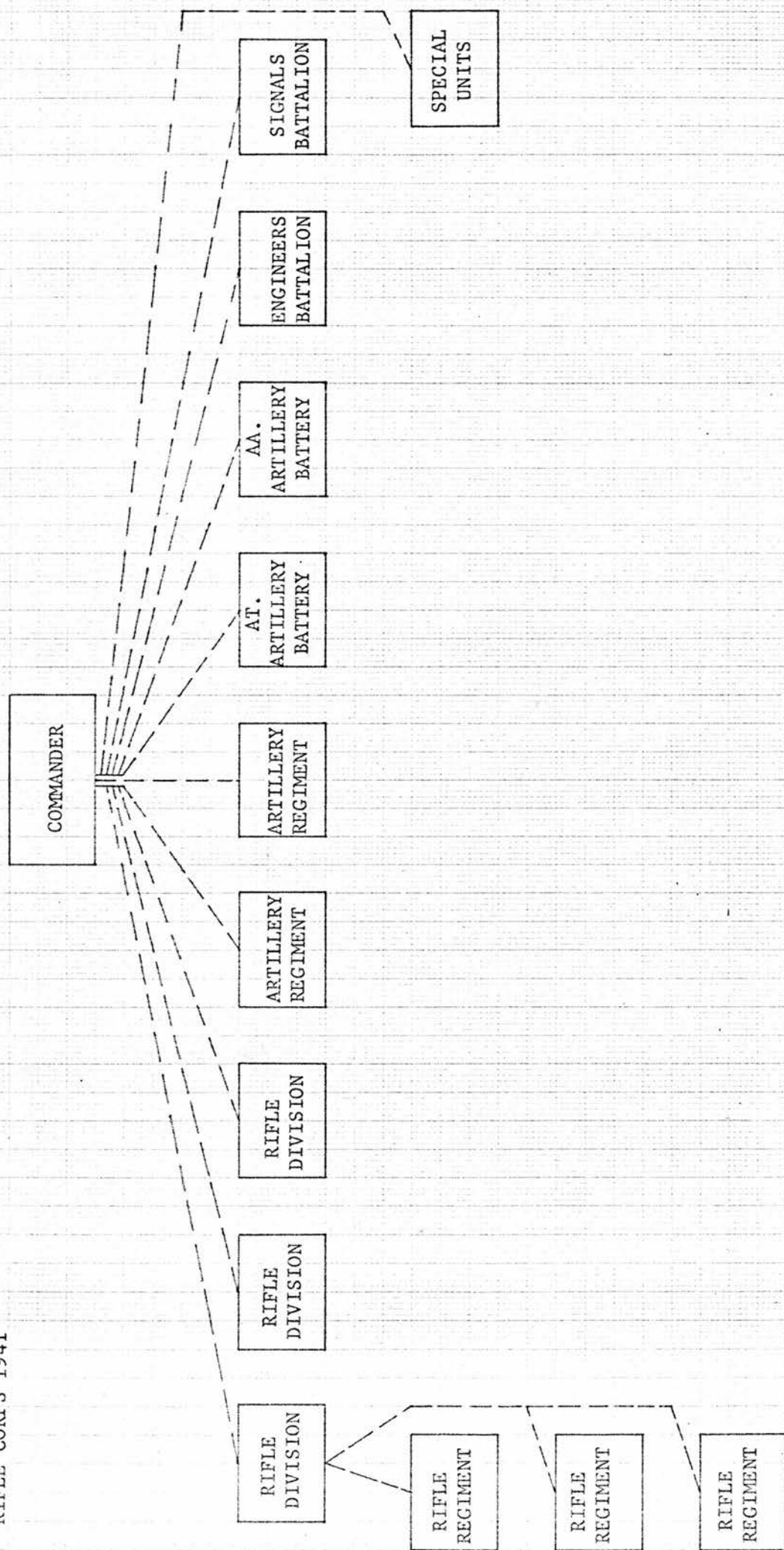
The debate following Rychagov's report also extended beyond the given terms of reference. Thus, Major-General D.T. Kozlov, Chief of Air Defence said that conquest of air supremacy was the duty of a Front and not of an Army's air force. Lieutenant-General M.M. Popov, Commander of the 1st Red Banner Army followed the same argument:

The struggle for strategic supremacy is included in the competence of the Supreme Command and the Front command and goes beyond the framework of the Army's command activity.¹⁰⁹

108. Marshal P. Batitskii, 'Razvitiye voisk PVO strany v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny', VIZ No.9, 1972, p.15.

109. Yeremenko, op.cit., p.42.

RIFLE CORPS 1941



He based his conclusion partially on recent German success in the West. Popov was impressed by German air raids on British and French air-fields. In his opinion attacks on air-fields helped towards air-supremacy. The German success depended, according to Popov, on whether they achieved surprise in their air-raids. Despite the previous terms of reference, the ideas about centralising large air-force formations under a Front or as a reserve of the Supreme Command carried the day. In that respect, as in all others, the tendency was towards enlarging the formations, and saturating them with mechanised equipment, i.e. getting high speed and high efficiency without giving up the concept of a mass army.

The sixth and last report of the conference Infantry divisions in Attack and Defence was read by Inspector of Infantry Lt. General A.K. Smirnov.

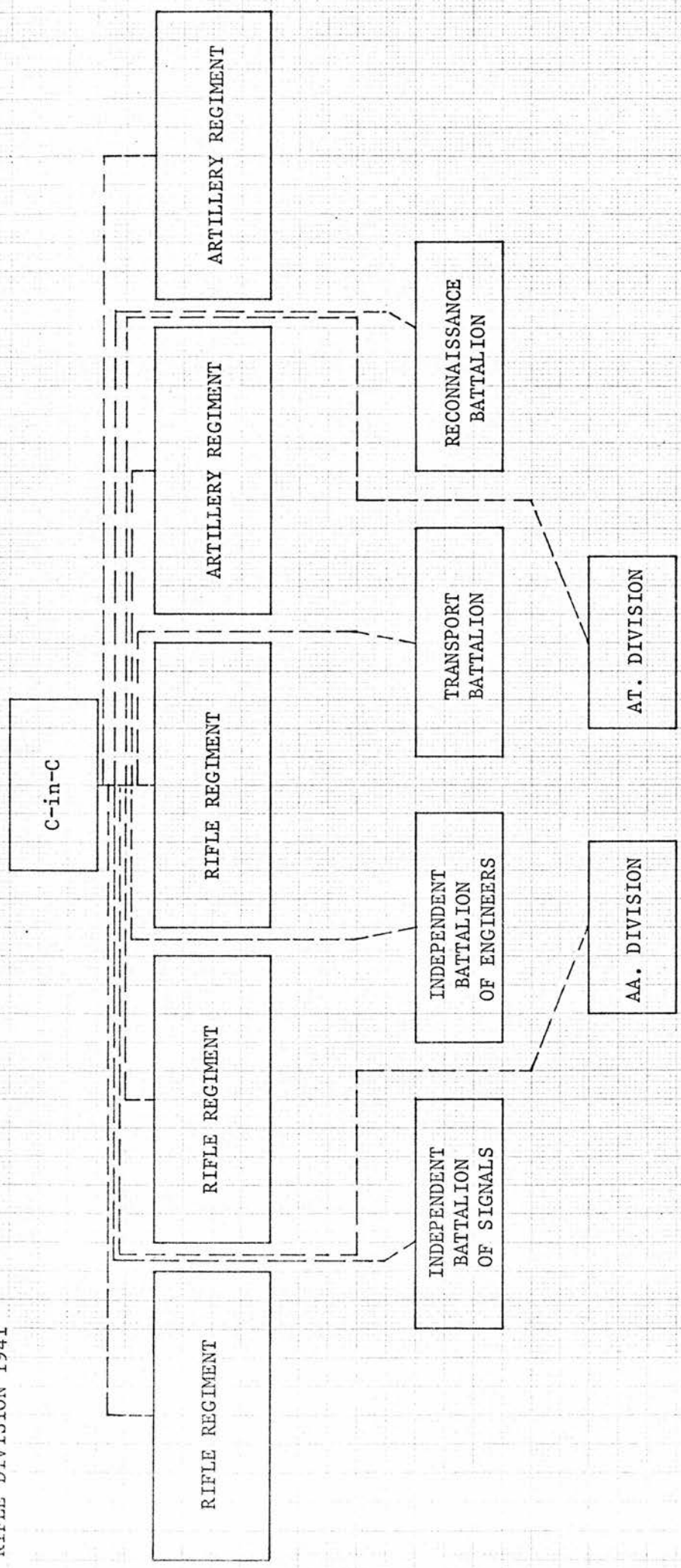
What is the problem of commanding soldiers?
Knowledge of the equipment by our commanding personnel ... mastering of equipment is the road to mastering of tactics.¹¹⁰

Smirnov obviously had in mind motorised infantry. In defence the infantry division reflected the same structure which had been mentioned in an Army context. Division was to Army as battalion was to division.

The basis of defence was the battalion sector.¹¹¹ An attacking infantry division faced the most difficult task. Only saturating such divisions with tanks and artillery could help them to overcome

110. Anfilov, op.cit., p.125.

111. Yeremenko, op.cit., p.43.



and penetrate enemy defence lines. With two artillery regiments, said Smirnov, the division could successfully break through a fortified front, four kilometers wide. Smirnov's report highlighted the growing role of platoon and company commanders. Since the beginning of the thirties, not only did every service have its military academy, but also every branch of the land forces. In 1937 there were 13 academies and 75 military colleges and schools and at the beginning of 1941, that is at the time of the conference, there were 19 academies and 255 colleges and schools. At the beginning of 1937, 79.6 per cent of the high ranking commanders had secondary or high military education. Amongst armoured and mechanised force commanders the figure was 96.8 per cent, in the air force, 98.9 and in the navy, 98.2¹¹². The standard of military and general education of commanding personnel had grown and was growing,¹¹³ but simultaneously there were destructive and demoralising processes in operation, not all of which were intentional. In Autumn 1940, a considerable number of older recruits fulfilled their term of service and were transferred to the reserve and new recruits came to replace them. Many of these were junior and some were senior officers. Many of the participants at the conference complained both about the standard of the new commanders and indirectly about the system of promotion. Thus Lieutenant-General I.S. Konev, Commander of Trans-baikal Military District said:

112. Anfilov, op.cit., p.124, the reference is to military education.

113. D. Fedotoff White, The Growth of the Red Army, Princeton University Press, 1944, p.378.

However great the cadres' needs, I consider it intolerable that commanders who have never commanded a regiment should be appointed division commanders.¹¹⁴

Lieutenant-General V.N. Kordiumov, Chief of military training in the Red Army, who was also head of a commission appointed to investigate the project PU-1939 said:

Talking about young commanders who were promoted to commanding posts (Kordiumov) - proved that they were all boundlessly devoted to the Homeland, but not all of them had enough operative - tactical training and not all had successfully coped with the demands of their duties.¹¹⁵

This particular shortcoming was a direct result of the purge.

.... at the end of 1940, the majority of our commanding cadres were very young. Some commanders during the last two-three years went through several service degrees and commanded districts, and large formations; they conducted the work of Headquarters in just a few months. They replaced the military leadership that was knocked out in the years 1937-38.¹¹⁶

Apart from the six papers read and the general discussion following each, the large assembly was divided into study groups to discuss and analyse tactical and strategic problems. Altogether there were five such sessions (letuchek) in which problems of Army and Front in attack and defence were raised. To crown this aspect

114. Anfilov, Ibid., p.125. The remark is an indirect criticism of the purge of the military, and so are the following two remarks.

115. Ibid., p.125.

116. Meretskov, op.cit., p.199.

of the conference, a war game on maps was conducted. Although not under fire, the commanders felt the pressure of demanding logistical, organisational and signalling tasks which cropped up during the game. The game proved that many of the young commanders, recently promoted, did not have the necessary experience in commanding large military units.

This part of the conference ended on 29 December 1940. There followed a two-day exhibition of new armaments. The commanders were invited to the firing range to observe the new tanks in action and then the conference reconvened on 31 December, 1940, for the summing-up read by Marshal Timoshenko. His paper was a survey of the Red Army during 1940, that is since he had been appointed People's Commissar of Defence (8th May). This part of his speech was in part a reply to the criticism of Meretskov and other observations which had been addressed to him during the conference. He went on to emphasise the German achievements in the West, underlining the factors of motorisation, mass concentration of mechanised and air forces and their inter-co-ordination. In the high speed of modern war, he said there was the danger of surprise. He praised the Soviet theory as opposed to the German total reliance on surprise and blitzkrieg (molnenosnaya voyna). There was rarely a case when the strategic aim of the war was achieved in one decisive blow. In order to achieve this ultimate aim it was necessary to get through a series of stages each of which might hold in substance the strategic aim of a particular stage. In other words, Soviet theory maintained at the end of 1940 that the war would be long and fierce, consisting however of several stages. Timoshenko also summed up the theme of offensive-defensive. He outlined the aims and the scope of a defensive

operation, which could engulf a whole front with several lines of defence in depth. Yet, the philosophy of military action, in his opinion, was based on the offensive. Defensive operation, no matter how elaborate it might be, was only auxiliary to the offensive. The Red Army should be in defence only when it was absolutely impossible to attack, in order to gain time for an attack, and for halting actions on secondary sections to enable the main one to launch an attack. But even while on the defensive, opportunities should be sought to counter-attack. All the defensive means should be always prepared because wherever this had not been the case during the war in the West, there had been casualties. Timoshenko did not mention that Germany started the war before completing her mobilisation, grouping and deployment.

Although military conferences were held regularly in the Red Army, the December meeting, according to those who participated and wrote about it, was different. It was basically military-professional both in agenda and in approach. Many of those invited represented the young generation of commanders who were promoted after the purges, a fact that the veterans, the survivors were very much aware of. Some comments which had been sounded in the debates concealed a bitter criticism of those who lowered the standard of military art in the Soviet Union. Stalin was well-informed on all the proceedings, but he did not make an appearance, nor was his direct influence felt throughout the conference. Within technical, professional limitations the military were left alone to consolidate the rich combat experience of the recent, dramatic two years during which the Red Army underwent three major, though not total, campaigns in Khalkhin Gol, Finland and Western Ukraine. Although

their papers and comments were based on past history dating back to the First World War and to the Civil War in Spain, the main interest of senior Soviet commanders was German performance in the west. These two approaches created a gap between the papers and the comments. The papers were based on earlier experience within terms of reference dictated by the Supreme Military Council and the General Staff. They had to approximate to the Red Army's actual capability until the end of 1940, and its potential during 1941. The authors of these papers were first approached during September 1940, when the full significance of recent German victories had not yet been realised, let alone analysed. Since the beginning of November, the date on which the papers had to be submitted, not only had Molotov returned empty-handed from Berlin but also the full impact of German might had been impressed on the mind of the Soviet Government. The commanders who were assembled by the end of December were in a somewhat different frame of mind. They were much wiser about the military difficulties the Red Army might have to face if ever the Soviet Union was involved in war. The difference in state of mind between September and December combined with differences in combat experience, age, education and knowledge of the real possibilities of Soviet industry and the armament programme, accounted for many disputes. On the whole, there was a surprising unanimity of outlook and assessment of the situation which could not, however, bridge over the gap between the school of people who wanted to apply First World War and Spanish Civil War experience to a future war and the other school who wanted to apply the potential of the Red Army as it would be by 1942.

In other words, neither school spoke in terms of war in 1941.¹¹⁷ The lessons of large mechanised and air forces and the need for their co-ordination with infantry and artillery were studied and digested. The significance of speed and its offshot - surprise - were impressed upon the commanders with endless illustrations. No one failed to acknowledge the importance and complications of defence, though the offensive spirit carried the day. The speakers admitted frankly the shortcomings in command education, in the poor shape of fortified lines and areas and in the use of radio for communications. All the Soviet theoretical erudition was aired during the conference and the participants benefitted from the use of unified terminology. Last, but not least, the Field Service Regulations 1939 project was given a boost.¹¹⁸ A foundation was laid for a clearer view of the training programme, the armament programme and 'combat readiness' of the Red Army in 1941.

The War Games 2-15 January, 1941.

On 1st January 1941, Stalin invited to the Kremlin the commanders who had stayed on in Moscow after the conference, for the war games which were due to start on that day. He was not pleased with the fact that Timoshenko read his closing paper without hearing his comment about it before, to which Timoshenko answered that he had sent the draft to Stalin and was consequently sure that Stalin had read it and had no comment to make. Stalin was not familiar with all

117. Bagramyan, 'Zapiski nachalnika operativnogo otdela', VIZ No.1, 1967, p.58.

118. IVOV, 1960, Vol.I, p.443.

the details of the coming War Games. He asked about the date and the commanders who were due to command the Blue (Western) side and the Red (Eastern) side. Finally he instructed Timoshenko not to dismiss the commanders after the games. The games based on map exercise which started on 2nd January, were under the general supervision of Timoshenko and were divided into two parts. The first game analysed a break through a fortified district and the commitment of mechanised corps to develop the breakthrough. The second was a two-sided game in which the aim of the Red - East side - was to offer stiff defence north of the Pripiet and create possibilities for a decisive offensive. The results of the first Game were applied in the second. The Blue - Western side - in the second game was commanded by General Zhukov (his Chief of Staff was Lt. General M.A. Purkaev, Zhukov's actual Chief of Staff in Kiev Military District). The Red - Eastern side - was commanded by Colonel General D.G. Pavlov (his Chief of Staff was Major General V.I. Klimovskii, his actual Chief of Staff in the Western Military District). The front of the Western strategic axis ran from East Prussia to Polesie. The Red side had more than 50 divisions and the Blue more than 70. The data collected for the games was based on recent German operations in the West, and on estimates of their force around the borders of the USSR.¹¹⁹

During the game there were several surprises. The Western side inflicted three strong blows on the defenders, penetrated the fortified district, routed the Grodno and Bialistok troop concentration and went on to the Lida district. This result was both against the

119. Meretskov *op.cit.*, p.200, see also, Zhukov, *op.cit.*, pp.223-225; also Roy Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, Macmillan, 1972, p.447.

Field Regulations according to which the attacking side needed a much larger advantage and against the General Staff expectations when they had planned the game. The two very complicated games lasted from the second until the eighth January. They were then analysed by the Blue and Red commanders between the 8-11 January. On this day when the participants who were away from their commands for three weeks were preparing to go home, Stalin phoned and invited all the participants to the Kremlin on 13 January.¹²⁰ In the short time remaining to him, Meretskov was instructed to prepare his analysis of the War Games. The participants in the War Games convened in the Kremlin at 1200 hours and faced the whole government and Central Committee of the Communist Party. It was not like the previous military meeting. Meretskov's report, which had been prepared in such a haste, was not clear on its account of the two-sided game. Meretskov claimed on the basis of the Field Regulations and the intelligence data available about the Germans, that a Soviet division had more man-power and fire power than an equivalent German one. On this basis, he calculated that in a meeting engagement (vstrechnii boi) a Soviet division would no doubt defeat a German one, that in defence, one Soviet division would withstand the attack of two-three German divisions and that in attack half a Soviet division would overcome a whole German one.¹²¹ Stalin raised a crucial problem. If that was so, he argued, how had it happened that the Blue side had crushed the defence of the Red one since the difference in number of divisions was lower than that stated in Meretskov's report. Meretskov tried

120. Kazakov, op.cit., p.61.

121. Ibid., p.63.

to argue that the Blue side had the advantage in mechanised and air forces to which Stalin had a reply, devastating in its simplicity. What would count at the end, he said, was not what we had written down in the book, but what would be the real circumstances. Yet on the other hand, Stalin challenged the data about the German strength, as it was presented by Meretskov, on the grounds that not only arithmetical majority counted, but also the skill of commanders and troops. Vatutin who helped Meretskov to compile the material tried to come in on that point, but he was cut short, while Timoshenko who read all the intelligence information did not support his Chief of Staff. At that point, the debate was thrown open to the floor where it immediately turned round to the major issue - mechanised-motorised mass army, ready for war of manoeuvre, in co-ordination with massive air force, or massive infantry formations saturated with thousands of horse-drawn artillery pieces.

Pavlov and Zhukov summed up their roles as the Blue and Red commanders. Zhukov pointed out the weakness of the fortified lines along the Western borders. These were the very lines whose vulnerability he had just demonstrated. To his mind, they were located too close to the borders and did not have the right configuration. Some indignant objections were raised against Zhukov's observations. Pavlov argued from a local-patriotism point of view since the fortifications were within his area of command while Voroshilov snapped that the decision regarding the fortified lines had been taken by the Supreme Military Council and their construction was under the control of Deputy Defence Commissar Marshal B.M. Shaposhnikov.¹²²

122. VIZ, No.3, 1965, p.52.

At that, the argument was cut short.

The chief of the Armoured Forces Directorate, Lt. General Ya. N. Fedorenko, retailed the problems of moving tank units about, sometimes distances of 100-200 km. with all the waste of time and machine-hours involved. It was not a matter of high policy, but a sad reality that the armoured forces in a constant process of re-organisation were moved around, some units 3-4 times. Many units were redeployed when the new borders were established and as it usually took about two months to service, repair and put the machines in order and as, moreover, half of the personnel were busy doing these mechanical and maintenance jobs, there was very little time left for training. On top of that, there were no training grounds ready for the armoured forces in their new locations and throughout 1940 they had to practice static gunnery. Another source of grievance was the relationship between armoured and infantry units. The infantry not only accepted literally their own major role on the battlefield, but to add humiliation to injury took advantage of tank mobility and the armoured forces' precarious status and demanded that the tanks should come to their training fields for co-ordinated manoeuvres - a further waste of machine-hours. The result was, said Fedorenko, that there was no training at all to achieve co-ordination between tanks, artillery and infantry. This basic demand of modern warfare was postponed to 1941. But although it was fitted into the programme, it was unlikely to be accomplished because the new models T-34 and KV, on which the programme was partially based, were slow in reaching the units.

Fedorenko was heckled by Marshal G.I. Kulik, Chief of Artillery who questioned the wisdom of having tanks in the first

place. According to his calculations, artillery was much more important as it proved more effective than tanks. Fedorenko answered in a calm voice to this rather heated interruption. He went on to prove that tanks had the advantage over artillery as they had a gun and were also mobile. It was a reverberation of the old dispute when Pavlov and Kulik were instrumental in making the decision to dissolve the mechanised corps. Like the dispute between infantry and mechanised units, the dispute between tanks and artillery had many prestige undertones and the symptoms of the services'¹²³ one-track mind. However the latter dispute was ominous in its implications because processes of procurement and adaptation of industry to new specifications were rather slow even in most advanced decision-making institutions and ultra-modern industries. Whether the decisions favoured artillery or tanks, both would probably feel the repercussions for a long time. The participants at the conference were aware of this. Marshal Kulik, following the logic of his emphasis on artillery, that is, on a static positional war, but in line with the ideas about mass armies, went on to suggest a sixteen-eighteen thousand infantry division. As for artillery logistics, he thought of horses as traction power. Kulik did not make this suggestion as an expedient due to the slow rate of tank production. He represented a school of thought which was not fully aware of the military industrial revolution which had been

123. Listening to Kulik someone in the audience cracked: 'Every woodcock praises its own swamp', (*Kazhdi kulik svoe boloto khvalit*) quoted by Yeremenko, *op.cit.*, p.46. Humour notwithstanding, this discussion cut deep into the bone of Soviet military thinking: For another account of the same discussion, see: Kazakov, *op.cit.*, pp.63-66.

taking place in the Soviet Union during the late thirties and the beginning of the forties. This school failed to see the possible applications of this revolution on the battlefields. They still visualised the war as a swarm of men and horses pulling at heavy guns and trying to blow each other out of well-fortified positions. These views were not adopted at the conference, at least not on theoretical grounds. The theoretical hurdle overcome, it was a problem of how much to procure of each item. The results in practice were sometimes nearer to what Kulik saw as an ideal than to what Pavlov, Fedorenko and Zhukov demanded, but the intention to achieve more mechanisation was established.

In his speech at the end of the analysis, Stalin emphasised that the coming war would be motorised, and that it would be a combat between mass armies in which the Red Army must be 2-3 times stronger than the enemy. The army, he said, must have automatic weapons and the rear both of the army and of the country must be prepared to supply the combat units with all the ammunition and food stuffs necessary to conduct a war. Without actually committing himself to either opinion, he compared Kulik's views to the views of the opponents of the Collectivisation. To his mind it was the choice between the tractor and the wooden plough.¹²⁴ Significantly he did not make the comparison between agriculture and industrialisation. At the end of the War Games, the Soviet Government had an accurate picture of the procurement demands of the military, whereas the commanders had a fairly accurate notion of the blue-print for production up to the middle of 1942.

124. Kazakov, op.cit., pp.65-66.

During the War Games, the Soviet High Command, the Government and the Party caught a glimpse of the enemy on maps, charts and figure columns. Some of them were over-optimistic, others were incredulous, not one expected a war within a month, and most of them doubted if it would break out during 1941. However, all but a very few realised the difficulties which were facing the Soviet Union in organising war industry, in training the Red Army and in fortification. They were aware of the Japanese danger and the implications of a war on two fronts. Yet with all this, the Soviet Union was at peace, formally and in practice. The Soviet High Command had some rough idea of the time it would take to order an alert in several sectors of the Western borders in case of emergency.¹²⁵ The Air Force reported that it would take several hours to put its units into battle order. But all these were speculative calculations. A full mobilisation had neither been experimented with, nor exercised. Fedorenko's report concerning the combat readiness of the armoured forces, Rychagov's report about the air force, and Zhukov's observations concerning the state of the border fortifications, were alarming. Furthermore, the machinery of mobilisation, that is the chain of command from top to bottom, as well as communications and the signals network, had not been put to any full-scale test since the end of the Civil War.

125. Zhukov, op.cit., pp.190-193.

CHAPTER III

PERCEPTION OF THE THREAT

In November when Molotov went on his diplomatic mission to Berlin he already knew about German military movement eastwards and since information about reconnaissance flights over the Rumanian-Soviet border was passed on by Frontier Troops as early as September, 1940, Molotov might have been in possession of this information too.¹ He could not have known at the time about Hitler's intention to attack the Soviet Union, nor of his instructions to start planning such an attack. Furthermore the shift of the German army eastwards although it was compatible with the strategic intentions of Hitler² answered the immediate demands arising from his Balkan policy. Hitler's strategic intentions were kept top secret and there were few, if any, breaches of security as long as these intentions were limited to planning by high ranking staff officers. However as early as August, 1940, General Köstring, Military Attaché in Moscow was told by Halder at a conference in Fontainbleau that Hitler had decided on an operation against the USSR.³ On 6th September, 1940, Jodl sent a top secret

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1. Collective editorship headed by P.E. Ziriyanov, Pogranichnie Voiska SSR 1939-1941. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow, Institut istorii SSSR, Akademiya Nauk, SSSR, 1970, pp.459-460 (Document No.482); see also, W. Warlimont, Inside Hitler's Headquarters, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964, p.136.
 2. H.A. Jacobsen (Editor), Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht 1940-1945. Frankfurt am main, Bernard und Graefe, Verlag für Wehrwesen, 1965, Band I: 1 August, 1940 - 31 December 1941, pp.5 (1 August, 1940), p.13 (7 August, 1940), p.971 (Document No.26, 27 August, 1940, 2. Gruppe XXI; Keitel instruction for reinforcement of the German troops in Rumania and their preparation for action within a short time); see also, R. Briul 'Voennaya podgotovka napadeniya germanskogo imperializma na sovetskii soyuz', Voprosy istorii, No.12, 1971, p.62; also A. Toynbee and V.M. Toynbee (Editors), The Initial Triumph of the Axis, Survey of international affairs 1939-1946, London, Oxford University Press, 1958, pp.378-379.
 3. Toynbee and V.M. Toynbee, op.cit., p.379.

directive to the German Counter Espionage Service announcing that German formations in the eastern territory were being strengthened. 'These regroupings must not create the impression in Russia that we are preparing an offensive in the east. On the other hand, Russia ... should draw the conclusion that we can at any time protect our interests - especially in the Balkans - with strong forces against a Russian push.'⁴ Thus, already in September, 1940, the 'top secret' was shared by the planners, by certain elements of the diplomatic corps and by the shady people of counter espionage - a group of people for whom there had never been any real distinction between reality and fiction. The more momentum it gathered the more people were let into the secret of the plans for attacking the Soviet Union. Eventually it reached down to the people who were to execute the idea, to translate the plan into numbers of tanks and planes and their operation on the battlefield. Guderian wrote that 'shortly after Molotov's visit my new Chief of Staff ... and my first general staff officer ... were summoned to a conference ... there they heard for the first time about ... Operation Barbarossa'.⁵

During November and the first part of December the German High Command held war games and on 5th December, 1940, Halder (CGS) reported to Hitler on the plans for the coming operation against the USSR, and expressed the German High Command's assessment of the Red

4. H.A. Jacobsen (Editor), op.cit., p.973 (Document No.29, 6 September, 1940).

5. H. Guderian, Panzer Leader, London, Michael Joseph, 1970, p.142. Using the words 'Shortly after Molotov visit', Guderian means November, or at the latest December 1940.

Army material and performance.⁶ At that time the German army was suffering from a shortage of tanks and transport vehicles which had to be made good out of captured French vehicles or current French industrial production.⁷ Despite industrial and procurement problems and despite many gaps in German intelligence information concerning the Soviet Union, the plan was developing apace.⁸ On 18th December Hitler signed nine copies of Directive No.21 'Case Barbarossa'. Directive No.21 was not an order to attack, it was a plan for a large scale operation and an instruction to continue preparations which had already started and to start deployment. Long term preparations were to be concluded by 15th May, 1941. Unlike tactical battle orders it explicitly left several points open, for instance:

In certain circumstances I shall issue orders for the deployment against Soviet Russia eight weeks before the operation is timed to begin.⁹

In section II 'Probable Allies and their Tasks' the text reads as follows:

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6. Generaloberst Halder, Kriegstagebuch 1939-42, Stuttgart, W. Konlammer Verlag, 1963 (henceforth cited as KTB) Band II (1.7 1940-21.6 1941) pp.213-214.
 7. H.A. Jacobsen (editor) op.cit., p.973. (Document no.29 6 September, 1940, Paragraph 4); see also, General Heinz Guderian, op.cit., pp.138-139; also, J.R.M. Butler, op.cit., Vol.II, p.537. September order to raise the German Field Army to a total of 190 divisions by May, 1941, twenty of which were to be armoured and ten motorised; also M. Van Creveld, 'The German Attack on the USSR: The Destruction of a Legend', European Studies Review, Vol.2, No.1, January, 1972, p.83.
 8. W. Warlimont, op.cit., pp.136-143.
 9. Hitler's War Directives 1939-1945 (edited by Trevor Roper), p.94.

The High Command of the Armed Forces will decide and lay down in due time the manner in which the forces of these two countries will be brought under German Command.¹⁰

The problem of transit via Sweden had not yet been solved and section five of Directive No.21 ended with the words:

I await submission of the plans of Commanders-in-Chief on the basis of this directive.¹¹

It is obvious that by 18th December the German High Command had no more than an instruction of a strategic nature to prepare for an attack on the Soviet Union. Although by January, 1941, several western agents had seen through the veil of Germany's secret preparations, they could not reveal more than the facts, namely the shift of the German army to the east.

On 7th January, 1941, the Reich Foreign Minister informed his Ambassadors, Schulenburg in Moscow, von Papen in Ankara, Heeren in Belgrade and Erbach-Schönburg in Athens, that strong German troop formations were going via Hungary to Rumania.¹² The information was to be kept secret. These German troops were to be stationed for the time being in southern Rumania, with Rumanian consent of course, prepared to deny the British Army a foothold in Greece or to eject it from the European continent altogether. As Ribbentrop emphatically

10. Hitler's War Directives 1939-1945 (edited by Trevor Roper), p.95.

11. Ibid.

12. R.J. Sontag and J.S. Beddie (Editors), Nazi-Soviet Relations 1939-1941, Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office, Washington, Department of State Publication, 1948 (Henceforth cited as NSR) pp.264-265.

stated, the move was not aimed at any of the Balkan states, including Turkey. The fate of the Balkans and the Dardanelles, as well as the vulnerability of Turkey, despite the Montreux convention and the alteration in the Lausanne treaty, bore directly upon Soviet security.

Despite its concern the Soviet Government could do nothing to influence German policy in the Balkans. Molotov had already failed to do so in his November visit to Berlin. The December meeting and the January War Games did not convince Stalin that he could try to extend his diplomacy by military means. Besides he had no reason to complain against the elimination of British influence from southern Europe. Therefore the only positive thing the Soviet Union could do to keep at least some political options open was to sign a new Russo-German agreement on 10th January, 1941. A German source referring to it, said that the agreement amounted to:

----- increase to two and a half million tons a year in Soviet Grain and fodder deliveries to Germany.¹³

A few days later Schnurre discussed the agreement with Steinhardt, the American Ambassador in Berlin:

He referred particularly to the deliveries of Turkistan cotton to be made to Germany, under the new agreement and remarked that he assumed the Soviets would import American cotton to make good any shortage resulting in the Soviet Union -----¹⁴

13. Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic papers, 1941, General, The Soviet Union, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1958, Vol.I, p.121.

14. Ibid., p.125.

On 17th January Dekanosov, the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin, presented a memorandum regarding German troop movements in the Balkans and asked what were Germany's intentions.

At the beginning of 1941 Hitler believed 'that the situation in Europe can no longer develop unfavourably for Germany'.¹⁵ However all the might of Germany's military machine could not guarantee Hitler complete control over all the variables. It was beyond Germany's power, for instance to improve Italian fighting competence either at sea or on land¹⁶ without heavily committing German forces. At a conference at Berghof (Obersalzberg) on 8-9 January, 1941, Hitler thought that the offensive against Egypt had no chance of success for the time being, but he was determined to help his ally both in North Africa and in Albania committing nevertheless as little of his forces as possible. Hitler's speculations regarding Great Britain's despairs or hopes¹⁷ notwithstanding, the British Army was still an enemy to reckon with.

To deal with this problem Hitler had first to solve the problem of the Balkans in order to use it both as a spring board against the British presence in southern Europe and against the Soviet Union. The immediate problem at the beginning of 1941 was southern

15. Fuehrer Conferences on Naval Affairs [Henceforth cited as FCNA] p.12 (8-9 January, 1941).

16. British attack on Taranto where bombers sunk the battleship, *Cavour* and damaged the battleships *Littorio* and *Duilio* on 11-12 November, 1940 and General Wavell's offensive in the desert which had started on 7 December and lasted until 7 February 1941; see Shirer op.cit., pp.980-982.

17. FCNA p.13 - 'Britain is sustained in her struggle by hopes placed in the U.S.A. and Russia. ... Eden is very pro-Russian'. Note: Eden replaced Lord Halifax on 22 December, 1940; see also W. Warlimont, op.cit., p.178.

Europe. The fact that it was used as a cover for the concentration of troops according to 'Plan Barbarossa' was an additional bonus.

At the same conference at Berghof Hitler reviewed his plans in all theatres of the war. It was obvious that to carry out 'Operation Marita'¹⁸ Germany would have to deploy troops in Bulgaria. The Soviet Government could not remain indifferent towards Germany's designs in Bulgaria regardless of the plausible explanation that Germany had no territorial claims in the Balkans and that any troop movements were aimed at Great Britain. On 12th January, 1941, a Tass communique announced that:

The foreign Press, relying on statements made in certain Bulgarian quarters, is spreading the rumour that units of German troops have penetrated into Bulgaria, that the transportation of these troops continued and is intensified, with the knowledge of the Government of the USSR, and that, at the request of the Bulgarian Government, the Government of the USSR has agreed to this penetration into Bulgaria by German troops. Tass agency is authorised to state that:

1. If it is true that German troops have entered Bulgaria, and if the transportation is continuing, it took place and does take place without the knowledge and agreement of the USSR, it being understood that this question has never been raised by Germany with the USSR.
2. The Bulgarian Government, in particular, has never addressed to the Government of the USSR any request relating to the admission or transportation of German troops into Bulgaria and has, in consequence,

18. For the sequence of events leading to the forming of 'Operation Marita', The Attack on Greece see KTB, p.164 (4 November, 1940), p.186 (18 November), p.193 (25 November), p.210 (5 December - first mention of 'Marita'); see also, H.A. Jacobsen (Editor), *op.cit.*, p.255 (9 January, 1941).

not been in a position to receive any reply
on the matter.¹⁹

Hitler was winning the diplomatic war for control over the Balkans, and thereby was also winning more room for deployment. The danger emanating from the presence of strong German forces along the borders of the Soviet Union was perceptible / it was far more difficult to define the threat.

It is true that the Soviet Government had been the recipient of many a warning against the imminent danger of a German attack, but so far all these warnings were of a general nature, pointing at the obvious, namely the disturbing presence of Germany's troops around the Soviet Union. The State Department of the USA was in possession of important information which it had not failed to divulge to the Soviet Ambassador in Washington, Umansky.

---- the German General Staff definitely called for a German attack upon Russia the following summer, as the Department of State was already well aware and as I advised the Soviet Ambassador in Washington in January of that year.²⁰

However, in the highly undefined transformation from a state of danger to a state of threat it was extremely difficult to decide when a

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19. Gafencu, op.cit., p.129; see also, Werth, op.cit., p.126; also, V. Issraelyan, L. Kutakov, Diplomatiya Aggressorov, Moscow, Nauka, 1967, pp.92-142. This source does not mention the Tass communique but mentions the Soviet Government representation of 17 January, 1941 and deals with Russian-Bulgarian relations in general.
 20. Sumner Welles, The Time for Decision, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1944, p.251; see also: Cordell Hull, Memoirs, Hodder and Stoughton, London 1948, Vol.II, p.967. Hull mentions the American commercial attaché in Berlin Sam E. Woods who was informed of Hitler's intention to attack the USSR as early as August 1940; also Whaley, op.cit., pp.40-51; also Nekrich, op.cit., pp.115-117, 119, 120-125.

perceptible danger turned into an imminent threat. Comparing Soviet forces and deployment in the Military Districts to those of Germany along the borders of the Soviet Union during January, 1941, those who made decisions in the Soviet Union were worried but saw no call for emergency. In January, 1941, the German army was not deployed for an attack on the Soviet Union, nor were there any indications where might be the main direction of such an attack, if indeed it was to come during the summer. Even if the warnings had been of a clearer nature, the Red Army in January, 1941, was not ready for an active defence, let alone for offensive operations. With no such backing Soviet policy was denuded of any active role and the government could rely only on increasing the pace of preparation. No great sense of urgency had yet penetrated the Soviet system, but then the indefinable nature of the threat - indeed, 'threat' was scarcely apparent - could not stimulate alarm. Many problems were yet unsolved in the modernized armament industry at the beginning of 1941; other problems were created by the very process of modernization. The problem of spare parts had arisen out of the new assignments given to industry to produce the new models of tanks and aircraft, whereupon many factories stopped production of old models abruptly and altogether. For instance, during the first half of 1941 the tank industry had produced 1684 tanks of which about 1500 were T-34 and KV.²¹ Related to this was the problem of the servicing and repair of tanks and other mechanised units. Repair technology as well as technicians were of poor quality; the crews did not pay enough attention to maintenance

21. V.A. Anfilov, op.cit., p.95.

before operations and servicing during and after it.²² The problem of fuel depots caused the army, the air force and the navy grave problems. Until 1940 it had been the rule that the army itself arranged its own depots out of the allowances made for it by the Ekonomsovet and Sovnarkom. The amount was defined for the districts and the fleets. April, 1941, was fixed as the time to finalise the accumulation of fuel and lubrication oil for military use and the reserves allocated were almost sufficient. But when the distribution map was examined it was discovered that the western frontier districts got less than was allocated in the plan. As the Commissariat of Defence suffered from a shortage of drums and containers, the right quotas of fuel were overlooked particularly as far as aviation fuel was concerned. However, even the existing depots were not suitably located and were for civil rather than for military use.²³

War industry though advancing in leaps and bounds had not yet been put on a war footing, because such a shift could have shaken the whole economy and hampered its civil side, for reasons that in January, 1941, were not yet absolutely justifiable and could not be properly explained internally or externally. Such a decision could have precipitated the same German reaction as a Soviet military thrust deep into Rumania. The decisions which were taken on the basis of the results of the December Meeting and the January War Games excluded the former as well as the latter. But even without a major change in economic policy, industry was struggling in the teeth of former

22. A. Karpenko, 'Sovershenstvovanie tekhnicheskogo obespecheniya bronetankovykh voisk v operatsiyakh', VIZ No.4, 1967, pp.15-16.

23. M.I. Kormilitsin, 'Armii nuzhno goriuchee', Voprosy istorii p.969, p.121.

decisions. Moreover the new push entailed further Party control in the shops and more rigid demands by military supervisors who were sent to the factories to put across the army's demands and specifications. On top of all that there were some intrinsic difficulties, peculiar to industry in its transitional period, such as uneven annual crops and distribution of vocational school graduates, assembly line serial production and managerial problems concerning the translation of blue prints,²⁴ as well as technical problems concerning special alloys, density and elasticity of steel and general lack of engineering knowledge and technical experience. Such problems delayed the production of automatic rifles and sub-machineguns which yielded eventually not the best possible choice, but the fairest possible compromise.²⁵ In some fields Soviet industry solved the problems of serial production as late as 1940. Before this year neither the threat, nor the size of the Red Army merited the production of millions of automatic rifles or sub-machineguns. Furthermore not until the Finnish War did Soviet military philosophy fully grasp the modern implications of infantry fire power. When the dispute whether to produce the Tokarev or the Simonov automatic rifle was finally settled, haste and expediency made it ever so difficult to decide whether to shift wholly to this new type or to maintain the old 7.62 Dragoon Rifle Mosin, M 1891/30. The decision which was taken in 1940 by the Central Committee, after a dispute between a special committee headed by Molotov and the Commissariat for armament, was

24. B.L. Vannikov, 'Oboronnaya promyshlennost SSSR nakanune voyny' Voprosy istorii, No.10, 1968, p.118.

25. Ibid., pp.121-123.

another compromise.²⁶ As in many other political-economic problems the question of automatic small arms was complicated by its implications. Before a procurement of a new weapon could be made a whole range of problems had to be examined: the size of the army in the near future, the design and calibre of the bullet, the design and size of the magazine, the design and shape of infantry outfit and of course training according to the new tactics resulting from the use of automatic rifles. It was estimated in 1940 that it would take industry 18 months to prepare for the production of a new type of automatic or self loading rifle (samoziaryadnaya vintovka). The more sophisticated the weapon system the more difficult it was to make decisions and the more devastating the consequence of every mistake. During the 18th All Union Party Conference - 15-20 February, 1941, - the Party tightened its grip on industry. The number of Party members at the time of the conference was increasing, reaching 3.876.885 members.²⁷ The conference aired Party complaints that too much attention was paid to agriculture instead of industry and that local Party organisations left industry too much to the care of industrial Commissariats. The representatives of industry were complaining at the same time that their work had been interfered with by outside supervisors and inspectors.²⁸ The conference instructed every Party organisation to appoint several secretaries whose job it would be to deal with industrial and transport problems and to exercise control.

26. B.L. Vannikov, 'Oboronnaya promyshlennost SSSR nakanune voiny' Voprosy istorii, No.1, 1969, p.122-125.

27. L. Schapiro, op.cit., p.552.

28. N.E. Nosovski, 'Nadezhnyi arsenal vooruzheniya' Voprosy istorii, No.11, 1970, p.

On 3rd February, Hitler conferred with his army chiefs. Halder compared German with Soviet strength, and Hitler approved of the operation plan, the aim of which was to occupy the Baltic states and Leningrad. The objective was to annihilate great parts of the enemy forces, not to force him to flee.²⁹ The Germans had wrong ideas not only about the sources and resourcefulness of the Red Army but also on the nature of Blitzkrieg in which they had become such masters in their battle against Western Europe.

On 4th February, 1941, Germany decided to activate small units of her navy in the Baltic:

All mine layers and motor boats together with a small part of the anti-submarine and mine sweeping units are to operate in the Baltic Sea. Finnish harbours are to be used.³⁰

By the end of February there were about a million German soldiers in Rumania but the Balkan issue had not yet been settled to Hitler's satisfaction. The Soviet Union was using all its influence over Bulgaria to keep it out of the German orbit, Greece was still a British ally, and Turkey had become a pivot of diplomatic activities and pressures.³¹ The Soviet Government was in constant touch with the Turkish one, bringing pressure to bear on the 'Sublime Porte' to keep it out of the war. Regardless of Russian suspicion of Great Britain the neutrality of Turkey was certainly a common Soviet-

29. H.A. Jacobsen, op.cit., p.297-298; see also, KTB, p.270 [3 February 1940].

30. FCNA p.19.

31. DGFP 20th February, 1941, Document 67, p.120; 24th February, 1941, Document 80, p.153; 26th February, 1941, Document 101, p.161; 27th February, 1941, Document 102, p.187.

British interest. The Soviet Union was also prepared to help Turkey materially. In short 'even if Russia were standing asleep like a piece of statuary, she would still be a powerful influence in the war. She was keeping Hitler guessing, notwithstanding the agreement they had for closer relations'.³²

On 27 February the Reich Foreign Minister instructed the German Ambassador in Moscow to notify the Soviet Government that Bulgaria was about to accede to the Three Power Pact.³³ The following day Molotov expressed concern regarding this move.³⁴ He mentioned his memorandum of 25 November, 1940, following his visit to Berlin to which the German Government had not yet replied.³⁵ On 1st March Bulgaria signed the pact and the following day it was occupied by German troops, which crossed the Danube from Rumania after exhausting all food reserves there.³⁶ After the occupation of Bulgaria European Russia was effectively surrounded by Germany and her allied troops. There was no change of policy but Japanese intelligence in the Far East observed transfer of Soviet troops westward. Berlin was rife with rumours. In diplomatic circles people discussed whether the next German move would be against Turkey, or, as the official line would have it, against Great Britain.³⁷

32. Cordell Hull, op.cit., Vol.II, p.906.

33. NSR p.276.

34. Ibid., pp.277,278; See also: Gafencu, op.cit., p.137 - Tass 4th March.

35. NSR 28th February, 1941, pp.277-278.

36. Gafencu, op.cit., p.136.

37. The Von Hassell Diaries, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1948, p.158.

However despite the marked deterioration of Soviet-German relationships there were still many fields of co-operation. Some were significant, as for example the grain and raw material deliveries to Germany,³⁸ others were symbolic, like the work of various Soviet commissions on German territory. These were refugee commissions which dealt with a small but constant traffic of people. Continuation of their work meant routine border activity, termination meant - trouble. Yet along the borders there were more and more German troops and the Soviet Commissions with their free passage across the border became a nuisance to the German High Command which had issued an order to stop their activity.³⁹

During March there was no perceptible change of policy.⁴⁰ If anything, March saw the beginning of a real dichotomy in Soviet policy. Moscow made its displeasure with Bulgaria apparent, and there was a marked rise in apprehension among military commanders, culminating in Timoshenko and Zhukov's appeal to Stalin to call up the reservists. During March there were reports that Party officials had made speeches in Moscow factories alluding to the possibility of a conflict between the Soviet Union and Germany.⁴¹ On the other hand, the country maintained a peaceful appearance. The press carried no overtly anti-German articles, deliveries of food-stuff and raw material to Germany were prompt and to the letter of the commercial agreements. However foreigners who lived in Moscow during this period

38. NSR 5th April, 1941, pp.318-319.

39. Ibid., 13th March, 1941, p.279.

40. Alexander Werth, op.cit., pp.122-129.

41. Ibid., p.126.

were aware of slight changes of mood and some stirrings of public opinion. 'The phrase mobilizational preparedness kept recurring over and over again in propaganda and the press',⁴² referring to the need to brace economy and industry for their heavy tasks. 'Russian public opinion, stirred and shaken by the invasion of Bulgaria, began to have doubts as to the wisdom of its leaders and the advantage of the Moscow Pact. ... there was an opposition, both in the country and in the Party' ...⁴³ If need be public opinion could easily be aroused against Germany. In March, 1941, the Soviet leadership could rest assured that Russian public opinion did not harbour any defeatist inclinations, although according to American sources it could be less sure regarding public opinion in the Ukraine.⁴⁴

Throughout March 'Case Barbarossa' was taking shape both in planning and in orders to ever smaller units to move and redeploy in the east. But there was not any definite timetable for the beginning of operations.⁴⁵ Rumania was denied for the time being any active role at the initial period of the onslaught. It was not even informed

42. G. Gafencu, op.cit., pp.138-139.

43. Foreign Relations of the U.S.A. 1941, Vol.I, p.132.

44. Ibid., pp.620-621 (American Ambassador Steinhardt to the Secretary of State, 7 June, 1941); see also: State Department - Foreign Office, Document Field Team, office of German Foreign Ministry: German Embassy, Moscow, collection entitled: GPU official Shigunow, negative frame No.175739. Under German interrogation Shigunow stated: 'The Soviet Red Army soldiers did not like to sacrifice their lives for the Bolsheviks'. (Ne zhelaniye sovietskikh krasnoarmeytsev skladyvat golovy za bol'shevikov)

45. DGFP, Document 195, p.338. See also: J.R.M. Butler, Grand Strategy. Vol.III, Part I, pp.67-68. Also: M. Van Creveld, op.cit., p.74.

of the very existence of such a plan. Elaborate and detailed plans for attack combined with impressive German build-up not far from the borders of the Soviet Union could not be carried out undetected. On 20th March, Under Secretary of State Welles again warned the Soviet Ambassador Umansky that Germany intended to attack the Soviet Union. According to Welles, 'Mr. Umansky turned very white'.⁴⁶

During March the Yugoslav Government was gradually cracking under German pressure which had been brought to bear in order to make it accede to the Tripartite Pact including its third clause.⁴⁷ The only political card the Soviet Union could play during the turmoil in Yugoslavia was to render the Yugoslavs some moral support. Therefore the Soviet Government supported the Serbian War Faction as it emerged after Prince Paul signed the Tripartite Pact (24 March, 1941) and the ensuing coup d'etat on 27 March, 1941. On 4th April Molotov notified Schulenburg of the prospective non-aggression pact with Yugoslavia⁴⁸ which was actually signed on the night 5/6 April only several hours before the already imminent German attack on Yugoslavia and Greece. The attack was duly announced by Schulenburg when he met Molotov on 6 April.⁴⁹

Soviet-British relations remained as cool as they had been since 1939, despite the complete change in the balance of power in

46. Peace and War, United States Foreign Policy 1939-1941, United States Government Printing Office, Washington 1943, p.110, also p.638 Document 202. Summer Welles, op.cit., p.136. Also Cordell Hull, op.cit., Vol.II, p.968. Also: Max Beloff, The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, 1929-1941, London, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1947-49, p.358.

47. This clause made it obligatory on the signatories to help the other parties with military force. See also: DCFP Document 144, 145, p.255.

48. NBR 4th April, 1941, p.316.

49. Ibid., 6th April, 1941, pp.319-320.

Europe. Throughout January, 1941, 'there was no discussion on general political questions between the two countries'.⁵⁰ A meeting took place on 1st February between Molotov and the British Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Sir Stafford Cripps, but it did not help to improve relations between the two countries. The dramatic events in Yugoslavia during March indicated the common interest of Great Britain and the Soviet Union. Indeed on 21st March, Mr. Eden suggested to Cripps that he raise the question of Yugoslavia with the Soviet Government. The Ambassador discussed the problem with M. Vyshinsky on 22 March but to no avail, the differences between the two countries being too wide. Great Britain refused to recognise the annexation of the Baltic States,⁵¹ and it brought pressure to bear on the U.S.A. 'to restrict to normal figures the export to Russia of wheat, cotton, copper, petroleum and oil-field equipment'.⁵² To the old suspicions against Great Britain there was added another factor of Real-politik - the obvious British interest in a Russo-German war. The precarious British situation in the Balkans and the Red Army state of preparedness were not conducive to a Soviet-British alliance. Cripps was kept at arm's length, and was given audience neither with Stalin nor yet with Molotov.

On the night of 31st March-1st April the British Foreign Office received a report from Belgrade that Hitler had told Prince Paul of Yugoslavia of his intention to attack the Soviet Union on

50. L. Woodward, British Foreign Policy Vol.I, p.597.
[Henceforth cited as BFP.]

51. Ibid., pp.489-490.

52. Ibid., p.602. See also: Cordell Hull, op.cit., Vol.II, pp. 970-973; also: Foreign Relations of the United States, Vol.I 1941, pp.600-601, 602-604.

30th June. On the night 2-3 April, Lord Halifax, the British Ambassador in Washington telegraphed that Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles had given him a report on Hitler's announcement to Prince Paul. On 3rd April, Churchill sent Cripps the following cable:

I have sure information from a trusted agent that when the Germans thought they had got Yugoslavia in the net - that is to say, after March 20 - they began to move three out of the five Panzer divisions from Roumania to Southern Poland. The moment they heard of the Serbian revolution this movement was countermanded. Your Excellency will readily appreciate the significance of the facts.⁵³

The time elapsing from the receipt of the information at the British end in London and its transmission to the British Ambassador in Moscow indicates a smooth communication net. Not only was the information about the German Panzer divisions' movements from Bucharest to Cracow obtained, processed and transmitted, a process which called for a decision of the prime minister, but it was also analysed against the background of the other pieces of information received from Prince Paul.⁵⁴ But at that point the decisions of the person on the spot - Cripps - and the cumbersome diplomatic relations between Great Britain and the Soviet Union put a spanner in the wheels. The British Ambassador delayed Churchill's message to Stalin until 19th April, one day before the 'Greco-British Thermopylae'.⁵⁵ No great damage was done since the warning in the first place had been

53. Churchill, op.cit., Vol.3, p.320.

54. BFP, p.604 N.1.

55. On 16th April, one day before Yugoslavia was completely occupied, Eden related to Maisky the message of Prince Paul.

given only as an indication of German intentions and British good will. Furthermore the factual message was transmitted to Stalin and Molotov by the Yugoslav Minister who had been asked by Cripps to do so. However, such a delay could only exacerbate Russian suspicions, probably not of the facts but of the motivation. On 23 April Cripps telegraphed that he had received a letter from Vyshinsky, the recipient of Churchill's message, to the effect that Stalin had seen the message.⁵⁶ Whatever the Russians made of this note it is worthwhile mentioning that the Axis Planning Section, a body which had been set up in March, 1941, by the British Joint Intelligence Committee 'to present reports on probable action by the enemy'⁵⁷ did not reach a final and definite conclusion at this stage that Germany would attack the Soviet Union.

Although the German attack on Yugoslavia and Greece did not bring any respite in the tense Anglo-Russian relations it did have an effect on Germany's preparations for 'Case Barbarossa'. On 8th March the OKW timetable for transportation to the east was ready.⁵⁸ Hitler might have had this timetable in mind during the hasty conference of 27 March, when on 13.00 hours he notified his generals of his intention 'to smash Yugoslavia militarily and as a state' (Weisung Nr.25)⁵⁹ and said the following:

56. L. Woodward, BFP pp.604-607.

57. J.R.M. Butler, Grand Strategy, Vol.II, p.541.

58. M. Van Creveld, op.cit., p.74.

59. GDFP p.373.

In this connection, the beginning of Operation Barbarossa will have to postponed up to four weeks.⁶⁰

Immediately after the beginning of the attack on Yugoslavia the Soviet General Staff ordered some corrections in the defence plan of the borders, and Military Districts Commands were ordered to reinforce. After the attack on Greece and Yugoslavia, which could not but end unfavourably for the USSR, there was no hope of any military opposition to the Axis designs for a 'new order' in Europe. The Red Army was left to its own devices facing the increasing might of Germany's war machine. The Soviet Government not only was aware of the danger, but was also taking steps to avert it. Reservists had been called to the colours since the end of March while military formations were being moved from the Far East westward.⁶¹

Indeed the Neutrality Pact with Japan was the only Soviet diplomatic achievement during the gloomy days of the German occupation of Yugoslavia and Greece. The Neutrality Pact with the Soviet Union which was signed on 13th April was a good bargain for both parties.⁶² Japan maintained her concessions in Northern Sakhalin and the Soviet Union received a form of guarantee against a possible war on two fronts. The emotional scene in the railway station⁶³ was but an indication that Stalin wanted to avoid a war even on one front.

60. GDFP p.374; see also, H.A. Jacobsen, op.cit., p.1199. See also J.R.M. Butler, op.cit., Vol. pp.71-72.

61. See Chapter IV, p.160, N56, see also, p.131.

62. See the text in J. Degras, op.cit., pp.486-687.

63. NSR 13 April, 1941, p.323.

However, Stalin had not received any such guarantees from his German ally. In the direct relations with Germany the trend of deterioration had not changed. An outwardly insignificant but symbolically meaningful concession was made by the Russians in their unconditional acceptance of the German demand concerning the border line from the river Igorka to the Baltic Sea.⁶⁴ A major Soviet concession was made regarding German aerial espionage. German planes were crossing the border with annoying regularity and in increasing numbers, especially during the first half of 1941. They ventured on sorties of 200 km. over Soviet territory at heights varying from 150 to 50,000 m. using light scouting planes and bombers. There was no clear policy towards the intruders and for several months Army units were shooting at them but without success. On 17 March, 1940, the NKVD recommended that the army should not shoot at the German planes, as evidently, according to this recommendation, they did not cross intentionally, but instead units should note the particulars of each incident so that protests could be sent to the German Government along diplomatic channels. This was a very convenient arrangement for the Germans, though it did not seem to satisfy the Red Army rank and file.⁶⁵ However, the Navy did not consider itself bound by the instructions issued on 29 March, 1940, and went on shooting at German planes which infringed Soviet airspace. On 22 April the Soviet Union officially complained to the German Foreign Office about 80 cases of aerial trespass from 27 March to 18 April, 1941. The German High Command countered the Foreign Office demarché

64. NSR 15th April, 1941, p.325.

65. Bor'ba za Sovetskuyu Pribaltiku, Vol.I, p.36.

by pointing to several Soviet flights over German territory and a concentration of Soviet forces on the German Eastern border. Whilst the Navy was leading its own policy regarding German planes the army showed great restraint, but Finnish or Rumanian planes were shot at whenever they were spotted:

Unfortunately our attempts to shoot down the trespassing planes were not successful.⁶⁶

The reason was that even in regard to Rumanian and Hungarian planes Soviet fighter planes were not allowed to cross the border even in hot pursuit. As for passive air defence there were not enough AA guns to cover the whole length of the border and the Rumanians and the Hungarians carefully avoided those areas which were defended. Perhaps more important, at that time there were not yet 'radio-location devices' - namely, radar - along the borders and the early warning system was too slow for the Soviet fighter planes to take off and engage the enemy.

The January war games followed by the reshuffling of the high command had some immediate effects on the preparation of the Soviet Union to face ever greater difficulties. Before the end of February, 1941, a plan for mobilization of the armed forces was approved. It concerned organisation and material aspects of mobilisation and was designated 'MP-41'.⁶⁷ After approval the plan was handed down to the districts with instructions to make corrections in the preceding mobilisation plans by 1 May, 1941. The operation

66. Pogranichnie Voiska SSSR 1939-1941 pp.396,486.

67. Zhukov, op.cit., p.228.

plan was also revised between February and April, 1941.⁶⁸ These latter plans were in turn revisions of the former plans that were valid until the end of 1940, whereupon they were revised by the Operation Division - Generals G.K. Malandin, A.M. Vasilevsky, A.F. Anisov - under the supervision of Marshal Shaposhnikov, General of the Army K.A. Meretskov and later on by Zhukov, the three consecutive CCS. Each revision took into consideration the lessons of the war in the West, the state of the Red Army and current political situation. The operation plan, judging it on its own terms of reference⁶⁹ envisaged an enemy blow from the south-east, aiming at the Ukraine. However, the plan does not testify to any urgency, nor does it indicate the possibility of a war before 1 May, 1941. Any Soviet deployment from that date on should have followed this plan's configuration. Yet the fate of the February plan was not better than that of its predecessors for two complementary reasons: it could not be applied with the armed forces at hand and it was getting out of date under the impact of outside events while still under scrutiny in the Military Districts. As a remedy to the first malaise Timoshenko and Zhukov asked Stalin's permission to call up reservists, as from mid March. Permission was given within a fortnight and five hundred thousand reservists were called up and sent to Western Military Districts. Although being reservists and no strangers to army life their accommodation, incorporation in existing

68. Bagramyan, *op.cit.*, p.88, KOVO-41 was the operational plan whereas MP-41 was the mobilization plan; see also, Anfilov, *op.cit.*, pp.170,197. Anfilov refers to a 'plan for the defence of the country's border; see also, Meretskov, *op.cit.*, p.205.

69. Zhukov, *op.cit.*, p.219.

units, let alone equipping and clothing put some extra weight on the already heavily burdened staff of the districts. The March call-up raised the standing strength of the Red Army by over 10%. Even though the country was at peace and the armed forces were not put on the alert such an influx must have had some disruptive effect on peace-time routine.

Simultaneously with such a considerable call-up the General Staff started to shift the weight of the Red Army from the Far East and the internal districts towards the west. It was not a redeployment as there had not been any mobilisation of transport or logistics. The trains were running usual services and their load of troops, incomplete in manpower and equipment were ordered off over a hundred kilometers away from the western borders. Even so, this transfer did not remain unnoticed by the Japanese in the Far East. They had their own estimate⁷⁰ to what extent the Soviet forces facing them were thinned. They had reasons⁷¹ for not pouncing on the opportunity, which fact the Soviet Government correctly gauged.

While these two trends were taking shape, namely the call-up of reservists and the transfer of regular units westward, both the mobilisation plan and the operation plan proved outdated by events in Yugoslavia and Greece. Even before Yugoslavia was wholly occupied

70. Study of strategical and tactical peculiarities of Far Eastern Russia and Soviet Far Eastern forces, Japanese special studies on Manchuria, Vol.XIII, p.47.

71. During two 'incidents', in Lake Khasan (August 1938) and in Khalkhin Gol (August 1939) the Japanese encountered a determined Soviet army under able command of Blyukher in the first incident and Zhukov in the second. The Japanese were defeated on both occasions.

the General Staff ordered some corrections in the plans.⁷² Neither strategic assessment nor date of possible war were put in doubt, only the capacity of the Soviet armed forces at that particular period to resist the kind of attack that the existing plans foresaw, was questioned.⁷³ As the movement of troops westward was gathering momentum during April the western Military Districts were put under growing pressures. Recent German moves turned a remote probability of war into a likelihood.

Directive No.21 presented Germany with enormous strategic problems. At the beginning of 1941 only a few divisions were actually engaged in operations: several others were garrisoned in the occupied territories facing little if any armed opposition. The bulk of the German army was being shifted gradually Eastward. The movement towards the East for which no definitive time table had yet been established was veiled in great secrecy. As far as the Soviet Union was concerned the Germans would have the Russians believe that it was all part of Germany's war against Great Britain. This was the official diplomatic explanation given in reply to all Russian representations. Since the Royal Navy was active in the North Sea and as long as the British Army had a foothold on the continent it seemed a plausible explanation. The Germans made the utmost use of this situation when they launched their 'disinformation campaign' in February, 1941.⁷⁴ By that time there already were close on a million German soldiers along the southern borders of the Soviet Union.

72. Zhukov, op.cit., p.228. See also: Bagramyan, op.cit., p.55.

73. Zhukov, op.cit., p.228.

74. See above pp.120,123.

Although German concentration of forces along the Soviet borders had reached by March, 1941, a considerable strength it was by no means a force ready for the attack. The German High Command tended to underestimate the strength of the Red Army, its logistics and command; yet at the same time the German Army had not yet solved its own logistic and ordnance problems. By the middle of 1941 the Panzer divisions which had victoriously swept through the Western armies, still did not have a heavy tank, for the new Panzer III was armed only with a 50 mm. L42 gun. The new armoured divisions had to rely on captured French vehicles. German industry in 1941 could not cope with the mounting demands for rearmament to meet the smouldering war against Great Britain and one planned against the Soviet Union. At this juncture the German High Command was about to be burdened with the Balkan campaign.

Hitler had no choice but to help his Italian ally who suffered defeat and humiliation in Greece. In November it was decided that Germany would carry out operation 'Marita' - the conquest of Greece - independently. Work on the plan had actually started on 14 November and finished on 7 December.⁷⁵ The assembly-order issued in December allocated 18 divisions for the operation, of which several were to stay as occupation forces and some others which had already been earmarked for 'Barbarossa' would then return to their assembly places for the attack on the Soviet Union. According to the plan (Marita) the German Army was to launch its attacks from bases in Rumania and Bulgaria. The latter had not yet agreed to become such

75. KTB, p.179 (14 November, 1940), p.218 (7 December, 1940); see also E.H. Cookridge, Gehlen Spy Of The Century, Corgi edition, London, 1972, p.70.

a springboard, while the Soviet Union, well aware of the pressure that had been brought to bear on the Bulgarian government, did not mince words in expressing its concern. While these processes were in motion Hitler felt that the oil fields in Ploesti were not well secured against British air raids or Russian expansion attempts, nor was he satisfied concerning the safety of the Petsamo nickel mines in Finland: securing these places was in line with general preparation for 'Barbarossa'. Nevertheless, by March, 1941, the German time-table for deployment in the East had already become strained and logistics problems had begun to mount.

The coup d'état of 27 March in Yugoslavia and the hasty preparation for 'Operation 25' - the conquest of that country - finally unhinged the German time-table for the attack on the Soviet Union. Although the number of divisions assigned for both 'Marita' and 'Operation 25' was not large, only six divisions and two corps headquarters were withdrawn from the second and third echelons of the 'Barbarossa' assembly. The staff-work and the logistics involved resulted in a postponement of six weeks in the preparations for 'Plan Barbarossa'.

When military operations in Yugoslavia and Greece terminated Germany resumed the concentration of forces and the piling up of material along the borders of the Soviet Union. No matter what explanations were given and what rumours distributed by German diplomats and agents they could not do away with the facts. From the Soviet side of the border Russian soldiers and Frontier Troops could see trains unloading, roads being built and strong-points erected. On the South-Western sector Chief of Intelligence of Kiev MD Colonel G.I. Bondarev reported that since April nearly 200 wagons

of ammunition had reached the border of the Ukraine every day. Thence they were transferred to field-depots.⁷⁶ By the number of German reconnaissance flights the Soviet commanders could infer that the Germans had not yet had a full picture of the Red Army deployment⁷⁷ and that the Germans were as suspicious of the Red Army movements as indeed they were of the movements of the German Army.

Four military agencies were entrusted with the defence of the Western borders of the Soviet Union - the Frontier Troops, the troupes de couverture ('covering armies'), the army air-force and the Navy each subordinated respectively to three separate Commissariats - the NKVD, Commissariat of Defence and Commissariat of the Navy. Beria not only represented the dreaded NKVD which had carried out the purges of the military but he was also actively countermanding steps taken by the army in anticipation of a possible German attack. On Beria's orders the Frontier Troops and the army were forbidden to open fire on German reconnaissance planes. Timoshenko and Zhukov were not invited to attend Kuznetsov's audiences with Stalin, whereas Kuznetsov had not approved of Zhukov's conduct of the General Staff. All these created tensions between the Commissariats, an aggravating factor since there was no C-in-C of the armed forces.

Starting with the Frontier Troops, these were deployed along the border in a complex of observation posts, strong points and

76. I. Bagramyan, 'Zapiski nachalnika operativnogo otdela' VIZ No.3, 1967, p.52.

77. See German Military Documents (GMD): for one set of aerial reconnaissance photos, Koluft, Stabsbildmeldung Nr.7. AOK 17, under file No.KOK17, 16593/1, for total German air reconnaissance coverage, see map Durch Luftbild gedecktes Gelände Koluft file; see also under Abschnittsstab Gotzmann Stabsbildabteilung, for aerial photos and interpretation.

customs check points. In case of emergency they were to be subordinated to the nearest army command. Although well equipped and well trained they did not have organically attached armoured or artillery forces. Their available equipment served their peace-time function i.e. protecting the border against subversive elements and contraband. Next came the 'covering armies' amounting to almost one third of all first-line formations, were intended to gain time for the main body of the army to organise and to move towards the border, as well as for mobilisation. Together with the Frontier Troops (but under their own separate command) they occupied the fortified areas, into which no other formations were allowed without a written order by the Commissar of Defence. In that capacity they formed garrisons which by January 1941 were not in full force and were poorly equipped with artillery pieces and ammunition. Armoured formation formed part of the second echelon and were meant to counter-attack enemy forces which broke through the border defences.

The headquarters of the five military districts - Leningrad, Riga, Minsk, Kiev and Odessa - corresponded more to administrative convenience than forming centres of immediate military significance. But even staffs of combat units which were actually near the border were lodged in Khatakh [huts], or in farmers' houses, sometimes many kilometres away from their units, because the permanent command posts were still under construction both regarding their actual premises and their signalling networks. These temporary centres could hardly be considered adequate for command and control of formations under fire. If as early as January there had been a plan for command posts in case of emergency, the commanders in the field were not aware of it, nor were they ordered to move into them: not until mid-June is there any

evidence of urgency in providing commanders with reliable means for command and control of their troops. Since a general emergency had not been practised the commanders could not have been familiar with the arrangements in existing command post.

At the beginning of 1941 the Soviet Armies were deployed in a peace-time fashion. Whereas the Frontier Troops were actually on the border, army barracks and installations were dispersed over a large area, approximately 50-60 km. from the border. The location of these installations had very little to do with any possible theatre of war of the units which were stationed in them. In the European part of the Soviet Union there were in Leningrad MD the 14th, 7th and 23rd Armies.⁷⁸ Their task was to defend a front of 1200 km. from the Rybachi peninsula to the Finnish Gulf. The defence in the far north was effected by independent units which were deployed only in vital sectors. In Hangö there was the 8th Independent Rifle Brigade, in accordance with the Soviet-Finnish agreement signed at the end of the war between the two countries. The Baltic MD was defended by the 8th and the 11th armies and three territorial corps, one for each of the Baltic states. The coast from Tallin to Libau was defended by two rifle divisions, and on the islands Sarema and Khiume the 3rd Independent Rifle Brigade was stationed. Their front of 300 km. reached from Palangi in the north of the Baltic to the southern border of Latvia. The 3rd, 19th and 4th Armies were to defend the Western MD, a front of 450 km. from the southern border of Latvia to the northern border of the Ukraine. In Kiev MD there were four Armies

78. Die Kriegswehrmacht der UdSSR OKH/Gen Stbh - O Qu IV Abt. FHO(II) Nr. 100/41 Geh[eim]. Dated 15.1.41. Teil I: Text.

the 5th, 6th, 26th and 12th. Their front of 800 km stretched from Domachev, through Sokal and Przemysl to Liphani. In the south, Odessa MD, along a front of 450 km there were several units which at the beginning of 1941 had not yet been formed as an Army. The Crimea was defended by the 9th Independent Rifle Corps.⁷⁹

However, at the beginning of 1941 all these formations were undermanned; a number of armoured formations existed in names only for lack of modern fighting vehicles and transport. Many divisions were down to 6000 men instead of the 14,500 stipulated in the tables of strength. The signals network was almost non-existent as far as radio was concerned and poor in every other respect. Apart from some particular sectors (mainly along the old borders of the Soviet Union) fortification and fieldwork were either blueprints or under construction, but even the existing fortifications were dilapidated and stripped of artillery. Military and naval airfields too were only beginning to materialise, being for the time being more hindrance than help. In all, from Palangi to the estuary of the Dunai 9 'covering armies' were deployed, the first echelon of which consisted of 40 rifle divisions and two cavalry divisions.⁸⁰ Evidently the theoretical conclusions of the December meeting, lofty as they were, had no immediate impact 'on the ground'. The translation of military philosophy into military combat readiness proved to be a long process.

On 15 January, 1941, the new appointments in the high command

79. IVOV, 1960, Vol.I, p.471.

80. Ibid., p.473.

of the Red Army were made public.⁸¹ There was no mention of a Supreme Command nor of a Supreme commander of the armed forces. The problem had not presented itself so far because there was no immediate threat, the army was not mobilised, nor yet put on alert. On 21st January, the People's Commissar for Defence published Order No.30 concerning military and political tasks for 1941. The necessary measures which had been taken to strengthen and expand the Red Army were no longer sufficient when the influx of new recruits enlarged the army to 4,207,000.⁸² Whereas every individual soldier was better fed, better clad and better trained, (the training time for privates was six months and for an officer three years, over all their period of reserve service) there was nothing to suggest that the general improvement had any effect on political decisions. The modest improvement in the performance of many units raised the confidence of the military but it did not help to convey the growing apprehension of commanders along the borders to the political leadership. For the Government as for the high command of the Red Army the dead-line was still the end of 1942 by which time - if all went well - the armament programme would turn the armed forces into a potent force to be reckoned with.⁸³ Until such time the army would get what it requested, subject to industry's capacity to supply it, but with no prejudice to the third five year plan. Military prerogatives by no means included direct interference in political decision making, nor were there any signs that they intended to do so.

81. I. Bagramyan, 'Zapiski nachalnika operativnogo otdela' VIZ, No.1. 1967, p.58.

82. IVOV Vol.I, 1963, p.460.

83. Meretskov, op.cit., pp.201-202; see also: Zhukov op.cit., p.231.

There was some degree of discontent - it had found some expression during the December Meeting - and some voluntary local attempts to anticipate emergencies on a Military District or an Army level. With no Supreme Commander, with no definite plans for emergency, without proven communication lines and with no confirmed plans for full mobilisation, the armed forces in January and at the beginning of February, 1941, were operating in a vacuum. They were no real factor in decision-making and they had no concrete orders for any emergency.

Zhukov's nomination as the new CCS was announced on 15 January, 1941. He was given a fortnight to wind up his affairs in Kiev. In this time he wanted to leave his command as well prepared as he could. He assembled all the commanding personnel of the Military District and held a conference on the same lines as the recent Military Meeting. Under the additional authority of his new mantle it was the best way to translate the abstract philosophy of the December Meeting into practical military measures in the field. Being among the military he could express his concern regarding Germany's moves around the borders of the Soviet Union, when this attitude had not yet been shared by the Party. In January-February, 1941, Germany was considered officially an ally of the Soviet Union. Zhukov summarised in his speech the theoretical conclusions of the December Meeting. He managed to amaze his listeners when he said that not only in the direction of the main blow must the attacker have an advantage of two or three to one but in all the width of the attacking front.⁸⁴ In the ensuing debate, General M.I. Potapov (until this conference commander of the 4th Mechanised corps) spoke

84. Bagramyan, *op.cit.*, p.45. It was an abstract notion in February, 1941, but it could fit into the envisaged plan for 1942.

about the need for air-ground co-ordination between the air force and the armoured forces. Yet his main contribution was the comment that the logistics transport for tanks and motorised infantry should be separated.⁸⁵ The meeting which took place in the District Dom K.A. lasted five days. At the end Zhukov announced that General I.G. Sovetnikov, till then commander of the 5th Army, was appointed assistant district commander for the fortified area, and that General Potapov replaced him as commander of the 5th army.⁸⁶ Zhukov arrived back in Moscow, on 31 January, 1941, and assumed his new post on 1 February, 1941.

The same could scarcely be said for other MDs in the Soviet Union. Elsewhere, it was a sorry tale of confusion or downright complacency. Admittedly, the command of the Baltic MD could scarcely be blamed, for even in the early spring of 1941 Stalin was intent on carrying through yet another aspect of his military purge by removing the senior command. In the Western MD Pavlov slumbered on and there is no evidence that anything other than the most routine activity was being pursued.

85. Highly theoretical since there was not enough transport for either.

86. Bagramyan, op.cit., pp.44-47. Bagramyan is wrong about the date of Zhukov's visit, and Zhukov's own version is correct, see Zhukov, op.cit., p.201.

CHAPTER IV

APPEASEMENT OR CHANGE OF POLICY

By the beginning of May the German army faced no more military opposition on the whole continent of Europe, up to the borders of the Soviet Union. British forces had evacuated mainland Greece by 30 April, 1941, and though they still held on to Crete they formed no real threat to the rear of the German army in Southern Europe. With the meagre air force they had on Crete they could hardly interfere with the Rumanian oil-fields in Ploesti. At the beginning of May, 1941, the Soviet Government had even less options for positive, let alone aggressive foreign policy than it had had theoretically up to December, 1940. Considerations which had called for caution then, namely the need to prepare and re-organise the Red Army, bolster and hasten the pace of production and build fortifications along the borders, were still in operation in May, but Soviet diplomacy kept a calm face.

The First of May saw the usual parade in Moscow. Observers were impressed with the motorisation of the army, and keen eyes discerned the heavy KV and the medium T-34 tanks among hundreds of parading armoured vehicles. A perceptive and knowledgeable observer noted that for the first time in the history of the Soviet Union officers carried swords on the parade.¹ Rumours circulating in Moscow had it that these parading units were in transit, on their way to the western borders. The parade was a further step in the ambiguous Soviet policy which had been noted two months earlier.² The very fact that the parade was held had been calculated to impress the German observers with the readiness of the Soviet Government for

1. A. Werth, *op.cit.*, p.132; see also: Gafencu, *op.cit.*, p.185.

2. See above p.121 (Chapter III).

compromise, a readiness which had nevertheless been based on the might of the Red Army. However, under the cover of this policy, on which Stalin pinned great hopes, the Soviet Union was relentlessly preparing for war. The very conduct of such contradictory moves - a policy towards Germany which had correctly been described as 'appeasement', while feverishly carrying out plans for mobilisation, fortification and defence - presented Stalin with extraordinary difficulties.

After the December Military meeting and the following January war games Stalin doubted whether he would be able to count on the professional capability of his army at least until the middle of 1942. Further reports since January could not have changed his mind, particularly in view of the unbroken successes of the German army and the political fiasco in the Balkans. Under these circumstances Stalin invited the graduates of Military Academies to a reception in the Kremlin on 5th May, 1941. He delivered a forty minute speech which was not fully published in 'Pravda' on the following day. The article in Pravda was entitled: 'We must be prepared to deal with any surprise'. The article read:

In his speech, Comrade Stalin noted the profound changes that had taken place in the Red Army in the last few years and emphasised that, on the strength of the experience of modern war, its organisation had undergone important changes, and it had been substantially re-equipped. Comrade Stalin welcomed the officers who had graduated from the military academies and wished them all success in their work. He spoke for forty minutes and was listened to with exceptionally great attention.³

3. Pravda 6 May, 1941, as quoted by Werth, op.cit., p.132.

Reliable and unreliable sources reported that in his 5th May speech to the graduates of military academies Stalin had said that the danger to 'Russia's essential existence'⁴ emanated from the fact that the 'Germans were evidently aiming at complete domination of Europe'.⁵ Stalin went on to say that the Soviet Government maintained the closest contacts with the Turkish Government encouraging her to resist any extreme demands on the part of Germany.⁶ Sir S. Cripps's report from Moscow corroborated essentially the other reports.⁷ Stalin's assumption of power made him officially responsible for Soviet policy making. He left no room for speculation about Molotov's feelings towards Germany.⁸ Furthermore he made it absolutely clear that from then on Party-Government-State were one entity, ruled by one person and represented by one sovereign. This move had far greater significance than the outside observer realised at the time. It opened the way for a unified supreme command of the armed forces, a problem which had not previously been resolved.⁹

The events during the first week of May, the military parade, the speech in the Kremlin and to crown them all, the nominal assumption

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4. Public Record Office (Henceforth cited as PRO) FO 371/29481 No.78 File No. N.2393, 24 May, 1941.
 5. Ibid.
 6. Ibid.
 7. Ibid., FO 371/29481 No.78, File No. N.2130, 11 May, 1941.
 8. Churchill, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.517-518.
 9. On the whole there had been surprisingly scanty Russian comment regarding Stalin's assumption of nominal power, but see Bagramyan, op.cit., pp.61-62. 'It must be said that we have all received this report (about Stalin's nomination AS) with satisfaction; see also, Nekrich, op.cit., p.131.

of power by Stalin, as announced on 6th May had external and internal effects. Put together they impressed the German Ambassador in Moscow and the Counsellor of the Embassy, Gustav Hilger, as a significant turn in Soviet Foreign Policy.¹⁰ They imagined they saw in them a sign that the Soviet Union would be even more obliging towards Germany than it had been hitherto. Moreover they found support for their view in the closure of the Norwegian, Belgian and Yugoslav Embassies in Moscow and in the hasty recognition of the Rashid Ali pro-Nazi regime in Iraq. The Japanese were of the opinion that when Stalin replaced Molotov as head of the Sovmark (Soviet of people's Commissars) he merely confirmed an existing situation. By May anti-German feeling in the army was not an uncommon phenomenon.

Stalin's ambiguous policy had a superficial success. It convinced German and other diplomats that the Soviet Union would be prepared to pay a very high price for peace. When Count Schulenburg returned to Moscow after his conversation with Hitler he was convinced that Hitler had made up his mind to attack the Soviet Union:

The die has been cast. War against Russia had been decided.¹¹

Since both Schulenburg and his Counsellor Gustav Hilger were convinced that good relations between Germany and the USSR were in the best interests of their country, and since they further believed that a war would not augur well for Germany, they were ready to go beyond the point of treason to warn the Soviet Government of the approaching

10. DGFP, p.964 (Document 593).

11. Hilger, op.cit., p.328.

war.¹² The same impression that the USSR was ready to compromise was carried by the British Ambassador, and certainly by the banished legations of the occupied countries of Europe. The other aspect of the Soviet policy received less attention. It was meant to be concealed as it involved not only troop movements on a large scale but also the rudiments of a possible change in Soviet policy. On the face of it Stalin did not take any risk by expelling the legations but he still took some measures to countermand if not the significance of the deed at least the bitter personal feelings of the people involved.¹³

Far more devious was Soviet policy towards Great Britain. Stalin's 5th May speech and the assumption of nominal power indicated that the Soviet Government was convinced that war with Germany was inevitable, and that it was only a matter of time before it broke out. If this was the case it was essential from Moscow's point of view that Great Britain should not be defeated, nor subjected to any peace offer that would leave Germany free to unleash all its might against the Soviet Union. The same considerations were operating on the British side.¹⁴ The deliberately ambiguous policy yielded strange results in Anglo-Russian relations. The British Government was doing its

12. See DGEF, pp.751,789, Doc.486,504 for Schulenburg state of mind, reinforced by Gafencu, op.cit., p.206, see also Hilger op.cit., pp.331-332. See also: Alan Bullock, Hitler: a study in tyranny, p.647 for Schulenburg attempt to influence German policy. Also: Shirer, The Rise and Fall pp.1227, 1275, for his part in the Conspiracy against Hitler.

13. Gafencu, op.cit., pp.193-194, Zhukov talks to Colonel Popovici, the Yugoslav military attaché.

14. BFP Vol.I, p.614.

utmost and scheming to do even more¹⁵ to encourage the Soviet Union in its unyielding position towards Germany. To that effect intelligence information about German troop movements towards the east was passed on to the Russians. The British had to move with extreme caution in order not to aggravate Soviet suspicions that the sole interest of the British Government was to embroil the Soviet Union in a war against Germany.¹⁶ The basic difference in the attitudes of the Soviet Union and Great Britain emanated from the fact that in May, 1941, Great Britain had already been in the war for almost two years. While Great Britain was at great pains to find allies, the Soviet Union was doing its best to preserve the peace. The mutual suspicion was not alleviated by Hess's flight to Scotland on 10th May.¹⁷

On 9th May Madam Kollontai, Soviet Ambassador to Sweden, told her Belgian colleague that 'Russia might be the next item on Germany's list', 'But,' she said, 'the Soviet Army was quite prepared and the Air Force very powerful'.¹⁸ There were rumours at the time amongst Western diplomats of a new mighty Soviet fighter. On the same date a circular from Moscow to Soviet missions in the West instructed them to explore cautiously what would be the attitude of other countries

15. PRO. Document No. CAB.65/22, W.M.(41) 58th Conclusions, Minute 2. 9 June 1941.

16. Churchill, op.cit., Vol.III, pp.319-323.

17. BFP Vol.I p.614., for the conflicting opinions in British circles concerning possible effects of the Hess affair and the use that could be made of it.

18. PRO. Document No. FO.371/29501 File No.N2131, 11 May 1941; also: FO.371/29501 File No.N2471/122/30, 27 May 1941.

towards a Russo-German war.¹⁹ Also on the same date Pravda published a lengthy denial of 'supposed movements of troops', of the Red Army,²⁰ exactly at the time when such movements were gathering momentum. At the time this denial was interpreted by diplomats as another sign of Stalin's 'appeasement'; only a few paid attention to the threat between the lines.

After the Soviet-Yugoslav treaty of 5th April and particularly after Schulenburg's return from Berlin, Soviet-Nazi relations came to a standstill.²¹ Not only did Count Schulenburg exhaust all his diplomatic arsenal in futile attempts to influence the policy of his country, but he was also suspected of going beyond his diplomatic discretion.²² He was kept where he was precisely because his opposition to war was widely known and his opinions served the great 'disinformation' game which had started in February, 1941.

Schulenburg and Hilger's indiscretion as well as British warnings that Germany was preparing a war against the Soviet Union were interpreted by the Soviet leadership in the light of what they had heard from their own sources and their own reading of the situation. Despite detailed data on German concentration of troops and several possible dates for the attack no responsible source could claim that it knew that the Germans were going to attack. The date 22 June which had been blurted out on 15th May in Berlin at a reception at the

19. A. Toynbee and V.M. Toynbee, op.cit., p.402.

20. Gafencu, op.cit., p.191.

21. Ibid., p.206. See also: Hilger, op.cit., p.330.

22. See above Note on p.147.

Bulgarian Legation by a spokesman of the German Foreign Office, Karl Boemer²³ was neither more nor less ominous than any other date that had been mentioned in the endless rumours which were reaching Moscow at the time.

Apart from mobilising, intensifying the pace of training of recruits in the army and deploying large formations which had been brought from interior and far east MDs, the Soviet Government was also following the cautious circular which had been sent on 9th May.²⁴ Soviet ministers were instructed to sound out Great Britain concerning its position on all war theatres; they were also asked to be warmer towards their British colleagues and to assure them that the Soviet Union was not on the verge of giving in to German pressure, and had the power to defend its interest. These impressions were gathered on 22nd May by a British diplomat who paid a 'periodical visit' to Madame Kollontay the Soviet Ambassador in Stockholm:

If the Germans do attack us we are quite ready for them. We are exceedingly strong.²⁵

On 27th May Maisky, the Soviet Ambassador in London told Anthony Eden that:

On no account would we give up any of our territory to anybody.²⁶

Maisky also mentioned the Soviet air force in an indirect way.

23. A. Toynbee and V.M. Toynbee, op.cit., p.402.

24. See above p149.

25. PRO. FO.371/29501 File No.N.2608, 5 June 1941.

26. Ibid., FO.371/29501 File No.N.2471/122/38.

During May it became obvious to the Soviet High Command that the available forces in the Leningrad, Baltic, Belorussia, Kiev and Odessa Military Districts would not be able to withstand a German attack on their own. General F.I. Golikov, head of General Staff Intelligence Service reported that by 5th May, 1941, there were 108-113 German divisions along the Soviet borders: six at Danzig and Poznan; five in Finland; 23-24 in East Prussia; 29 in Poland against the Western Military District and 31-34 in Poland against the Kiev Military District; 14-15 in the Carpathians, Moldavia and North Dobruja.²⁷ On 13 May it was decided to move 4 Armies and one rifle corps from interior Military District westward under the guise of mobile training camps. The 22nd Army was transferred from the Urals to Velikiye Luki; the 21st from the Volga district to Gomel; the 19th from the North Caucasus to Belaya Tserkov; the 16th from Trans-Baikal to Shepetovka; and the 26th Rifle corps from Kharkov to the Western Dvina.

The Western Military Districts were ordered at short notice to prepare accommodation for the incoming formations. As the packed troop trains kept coming they completely disrupted the training programmes of soldiers and staff. Meanwhile the call-up of reservists was moving apace with recruitment. The former had to readjust to a military regime, the latter had to go through refresher courses which started at the beginning of May. Towards the end of May the General Staff instructed the commanders of the western districts to establish front commands not later than 20th June. They were to be at Panevezys for Baltic Military District, Obuz-Lesna for Western

27. Zhukov, op.cit., p.250 ; see also Nekrich, op.cit., pp.124-125.

Military District, Ternopol for Kiev Military District and Tiraspol for Odessa Military District. In immediate proximity to the border there were 47 infantry and six naval regiments. On the border there were several rifle divisions of the Covering Army which were not deployed for combat and 11 regiments of the Frontier Troops still under the command of the NKVD.²⁸ Timoshenko's instruction at the beginning of May detailing tasks for the troops in case of a German surprise attack, though an indicator of the alarm in the Commissariat of Defence and the General Staff, had only slightly changed the deployment of the troops along the border. However, Timoshenko's instruction helped to define roughly the tasks of the first and the second echelons.²⁹ The Plan for Defence of the Country's Border had not yet been ratified in Moscow by the beginning of May. Troops were slowly moving westward, without seeing the light of day, slightly exposing the Far East,³⁰ but extremely cautious not to arouse the wrath of Germany, nor give it the slightest excuse for an immediate war. Studying Timoshenko's instructions Colonel Bagramyan, Chief of operations Kiev Military District, who went through the operational papers (operativnaya dokumentatsiya) had some doubts concerning the rear of the new deployment. On relating his doubts to his Chief of Staff General Purkaev he got the reply:

28. Zhukov, op.cit., p.236. At a time of war they came under the command of the nearest army H.Q.; see Pogranichniye Voiska SSSR 1939-1941 p.402 Document 398, 20 June, 1941.

29. Bagramyan, op.cit., p.62.

30. The Russo-Japanese neutrality pact of 13 April, 1941, gave the Soviet Government reason to believe that the Japanese did not plan any immediate aggression.

In Moscow they know what to do (V Moskve znayut shto delayut). There would be somebody in the rear to meet an enemy which had broken through.³¹

In May, as in December, the ideal date for war, if indeed war was inevitable, was the middle of 1942. No substantial German demands were put to the Soviet Government and it was not asked to do anything to conciliate Germany but was prepared to go a long way, though by no means all the way, in order to postpone war.

Throughout May the units arrived not fully mobilised, not fully equipped and without sufficient transport. Trains still worked on peace time schedule. War was becoming a probability not yet a likelihood. Although the nature of the coming war had already been discussed in December and some good articles were circulating in military journals it had not yet become a reality. Not even the glimpse they had caught of modern warfare in Western, Northern and recently Southern Europe changed the minds of those whose military experience had been forged during the First World War.³² The deployment of the Soviet Troops in May and June was proof that the Soviet military leadership believed in a war that would develop in stages. They did not think much of a strategic surprise attack and were convinced that they would have time to mobilise, establish logistics and deploy after the beginning of hostilities.³³

31. Bagramyan, op.cit., p.63.

32. M.V. Zakharov, 'Stranitsy istorii sovetskikh vooruzhennykh sil nakanunye Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny 1939-1941', Voprosy istorii No.5, 1970, p.40. All the MDs' commanders on the eve of the war were veterans of the First World War.

33. IVOV, 1963, Vol.I, p.472.

The huge call-up, transfer and reorganisation created an acute shortage of command staff. The Kiev Military District alone was short of 30,000 men for command and technical staff. The 3rd and 12th mechanized corps [8th and 11th Armies] in the Baltic MD were short of men, sergeants and particularly officers.³⁴ On 14 May the Commissar of Defence ordered an end to the study periods for cadets and their immediate transport to the field. By the end of May the number of reservists had soared to 793,000.³⁵ The American Embassy cabled home on 22 May that:

There has recently been a substantial troop movement from Vladivostok west bound. Many trainloads of Soviet Army units including artillery and tanks departed for the west.³⁶

On 20th May the 34th Rifle Corps was transferred from North Caucasus to the west. The first to arrive was an operative group under the command of Lieutenant-General M.A. Reiter, First Deputy Commander North Caucasus Military District. Following this group came four rifle divisions and one mountain rifle division. By the beginning of June this force became part of the newly organised 19th Army.³⁷ At about that time half the divisions of the western districts were completed up to 12,000 men. Some more weapons and equipment were issued to these divisions. It is not difficult to estimate the amount of organisational work and administrative skill demanded of the

34. Bagramyan, op.cit., p.72; also: Bor'ba za sovietskuyu pribaltiku, p.41.

35. Anfilov, op.cit., p.180.

36. Foreign relations of the U.S., Vol.I, p.146.

37. Bagramyan, op.cit., p.63.

people in charge of such an effort. On top of the mammoth transfer westward there was a trickle of transport eastward, for instance the Infantry College which was transferred from Lvov to the Urals on 25 May.³⁸ By May, along the 2000 km. border from Palangi to Dunai there were 9 Armies, according to the Plan of Defence, but the first echelon consisted of only 40 rifle divisions and 2 cavalry divisions.³⁹

The last week of May and the first week of June saw a gradual and significant change in deployment. While all the former activities were running concurrently, namely call-up of reservists, training of recruits, organisation of new formations and transfer of large units from the Far East and internal districts, some new moves were observed within the western districts. Whereas on paper Timoshenko's instructions merely earmarked the units which were allocated as first and second echelons, in the field they meant a considerable transformation. The units were not only to move to their newly designated camps, which were still far away from their theatres of operation in case of war, according to the Plan of Operation, but also to incorporate the new rank and file reservists. Moreover, in their new accommodations they had to accustom themselves to the new environment while getting down immediately to their training programme, which was going on despite all the commotion.⁴⁰

In the Baltic MD, 50th and 125th Rifle Divisions held

38. Bagramyan, op.cit., p.59.

39. IVOV 1960, Vol.I, p.473.

40. K.S. Moskalenko, op.cit., p.18. The first anti-tank brigade had a training programme of 8-10 hours a day and 2-3 hours, night training per week. See also: Bor'ba za Sovetskuyu Pribaltiku, pp.44-45.

exercises in which co-ordination between them and their warning system were found to be unsatisfactory. As some of the intelligence information sent from the border to Moscow was sifted, the district commanders could not help being deeply worried by the concentration of enemy forces facing their sectors of responsibility. Under the relentless, though somewhat diffuse pressure from Moscow, the torrents of instruction, the comforting burden of reinforcement and the alarming reports from the borders, it was only sensible that district commanders would use their commonsense and secure the advanced posts of their fronts. The manning of Fortified Areas: URs - (Ukreplenie rayony) was strictly forbidden, but there were many other field fortifications which could be occupied. Thus, while moving forward his second echelon Kirponos ordered his commanders to occupy with small forces forward positions along the border according to the Plan of Defence (KOVO-41).⁴¹ On 10 June, Kirponos ordered 62nd Rifle Divisions, 5th Army to move from Lutsk closer to the border. The 193rd Rifle Division was ordered to move from Korosten to the Pavurskii camp; 31st Rifle Corps from Stry; 3rd Cavalry Division from Nesterov to Isyaslavl to be accommodated there in the barracks of the 32nd Cavalry Division and the 190th Rifle Division from Cherkassy to Nesterov to replace the 3rd Cavalry Division. The authority ratifying this movement of the second echelon came on 12 June in an order signed by Timoshenko, but on the same date there was another order cancelling the occupation of the advanced line of defence and ordering back the

41. Meretskov, op.cit., p.205; also Bagramyan, op.cit., p.68.
See Chapter 1, N.17.

troops sent there.⁴² The to and fro movements must have puzzled the local commanders as to the intentions of their government. For several of the second echelon units the march distance to the border, only at night but in peaceful conditions, was eight to ten nights.

The Tass communiqué published on 14 June could not really alleviate the worries of commanders in the field. In the spirit of this announcement the political workers in the 11th Army Baltic MD told the soldiers on the evening of 21 June that there would be no war.⁴³ On 14 June the Military Council of Odessa Military District was ordered to allot an operative group in order to establish an Army command and lodge it in Tiraspol.⁴⁴ The Military Council of the Baltic Military District was busy too. On 15 June rifle divisions of the district were ordered to prepare their defence sectors, but they did not do so, and did not work out a fire system using existing fire points.⁴⁵ Both soldiers and commanders were apprehensive of the situation, whereupon political workers were sent to the units to explain government motives.⁴⁶ The sappers were ordered to lay mines ready for activation within three hours.

On 17 June Moscow ordered Kiev Military District to move another five rifle corps closer to the border. The 31st Rifle Corps from Korosten was ordered to arrive at Kovel by 28 June; its Staff

42. Bagramyan, op.cit., p.68. Note, 31st Rifle Corps and 3rd

43. K.S. Moskalenko op.cit., p.20; see also: Bor'ba za sovetskuyu pribaltiku, p.46.

44. Anfilov, op.cit., p.181.

45. Anfilov, Nachalo velikoi otechestvennoi voiny, p.44.

46. Borba za sovetskuyu pribaltiku, p.44.

was due to arrive on 22 June. Usually it took the corps 2-3 days to cover the distance from its camp to the deployment areas on foot, but under the veil of secrecy it was obliged to move only at night, as during day time there were German reconnaissance planes flying unmolested overhead.⁴⁷ Under such conditions the corps could not have been expected to arrive before 10-12 days, as indeed it was ordered to do. 36 Rifle Corps should have occupied the line Dubno-Kozin-Kremets by the morning of 27 June; and 49th Rifle Corps by 30 June.⁴⁸ Whatever the original urgency in ordering the transfer of these corps they were certainly given ample time en route. Whereas the 31st, 36th and 37th Rifle Corps were assigned a successive line of defence, though still quite a distance from the border, the destinations of the 55th and 49th Rifle Corps were not clearly defined. On 18 June at 20.00 hours several rifle divisions of the Kiev Military District without their equipment and supplies (which according to plan were to be released only after the order for mobilisation) but complete in manpower, were ordered to move closer to the border.⁴⁹ The Military Council in the Baltic Military District was ordered on the same day to put the anti-aircraft defence on the alert as from 19 June. The chief of signals was ordered to put on the alert all the signals systems in Baltic Military District. Chief of Military transport was ordered to put the

47. Colonel N. Svetlishin, 'Nekotorie voprosy primeneniya Voisk PVO strany' VIZ 12, 1969, p.17 N. The Red Army was well equipped to record German flights and the Germans did not make great effort to conceal them. But see preceding page for the movement of 31st Rifle Corps. Either the Corps was divided into section or else its deployment orders were changed between the 10th and the 17th June.

48. Bagramyan, op.cit., p.77.

49. Anfilov, op.cit., p.181.

railway system service on a war footing as from 22 June. The commanders of the 8th and 11th Armies were ordered to point out to the sappers their mines depots in order to lay mines according to the Plan of Defence. They were also ordered to reconnoitre the bridges, prepare explosives and earmark units that would be in charge of destroying the bridges if the need arose.⁵⁰ Mechanised corps were ordered to move to the regions and sectors allocated to them in the Plan of Defence.⁵¹

Despite the order of May the Baltic, West and Kiev districts had not yet had command posts on 18 June whereupon they were instructed again to establish such posts and reorganise as the North-West, West and South West fronts, by 22-23 June.⁵² On 19 June Zhukov cabled Kiev HQ ordering the establishment of a Front Command in Ternopol by 22 June. The cable ordered complete secrecy.⁵³ These orders were issued under the pressure of perceptible danger but with no definite date in mind. For instance Timoshenko's order of 19 June to camouflage airfields, tanks, armoured cars, command cars and other special cars (radio cars) was to be carried out by 15 July! Even so it was an enormous task. In the Baltic MD, for instance, there were 70 airfields, 49 of which were operative. However it was noticeable that Kirponos received it on the 20 June and carried it out by 21 June. By that date the beautiful colours, the delight of every military commander were camouflaged and the heavy equipment of the

50. Anfilov, op.cit., p.181.

51. Ibid., p.183.

52. Ibid., p.187.

53. Bagramyan, op.cit., p.83.

5th Army was hastily driven into groves and forests.⁵⁴ The order to establish the South Front was carried out on 20-21 June. Its operative command was established in Vinitsa.⁵⁵

Whatever Stalin's ideas about Germany's intention the rumours and information were percolating from abroad and from the borders indicating an approaching war, the time, the place and the size of which were yet unclear on 21 June, 1941. Soldiers were training 8-10 hours daily and 2-3 hours every night, there were professional-technical courses for special units, the air force carried out night manoeuvres and military trains kept moving from the east westward. An American diplomat reported on 21 June:

While travelling from Krasnoyarsk to Chita his train met between 200-220 westbound trains averaging 25 cars each of which seven were loaded with troops and the remaining 18 with artillery, tanks. -----
He noted no unusual movement west of Krasnoyarsk nor east of Chita.⁵⁶

Feverish activity was taking place in the High Command too. On 21 June Zhukov was appointed as an overall commander of the South and South-West Fronts, Meretskov as an overall commander of the Northern Front,⁵⁷ and Marshall Budenny as commander of the Armies of the High Command reserves, which were moved forward to the Dnieper.⁵⁸ On

54. Moskalenko, op.cit., p.24.

55. Anfilov, op.cit., p.182.

56. The Foreign Relations of the U.S. Vol.I, p.150.

57. Anfilov, op.cit., p.182.

58. Ibid.

21 June, 1941, all the personnel of the General Staff and the Commissariat of Defence were ordered to stay in their offices overnight.⁵⁹

British and American observers were perturbed by Stalin's ambivalent policy. Every move on the side of such an important power had repercussions all over Europe and beyond. Although Great Britain - and to some extent the USA - could not ignore the Soviet Union's policy toward Germany they could still enjoy a considerable freedom of their own policies. The Germans too, were puzzled by the contradictions in Soviet policy. Stalin was eager to please the Germans, but he had also secured his rear against a Japanese attack;⁶⁰ he professed peaceful intentions and exhibited mighty new airplanes.⁶¹ A Soviet delegation was innocently incredulous when shown the latest models of German tanks, suggesting that the Russians might have

59. Zhukov, op.cit., p.212.

60. R.D. Warth, Soviet Russia In World Politics, London, Vision Press, 1963, pp.254-257. Warth suggests that Japan's commitment in South Asia dictated its attitude towards the Soviet Union; see also, V. Issraelyan, L. Kutakov, op.cit., pp.170-171. This source throws interesting light on Japanese foreign policy as it was formulated on 3rd February, 1941, by Matsuoka's initiative, and on Japanese-German and Japanese-American relations; see, DGFP, p.570, Document 361 (16th April, 1941) p.642, Document 408 (26th April, 1941) for German views of the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact; see Documents on American Foreign Relations 1940-41 pp.291-292 for text of the Pact

61. W.G. 'MIG-3, Undistinguished forbear of a distinguished line'. Air Enthusiast Vol.1, No.5, October, 1971, pp.252-254, Oberst Heinrich Ashenbrenner delegation visits the USSR in April, 1941. This visit combined with some diplomatic activities (see Chapter III p.148) to impress the world with the might of the Soviet Air Force; see also KTB, pp.396-397, 5 May, 1941. Krebs report on USSR readiness to come a long way towards Germany. He also reports a new fighter and deployment of long range bombers near the border.

exceeded these models.⁶² However, Germany maintained the military and the diplomatic initiative and dictated most of the moves in Europe after the end of 1940.

Whereas Stalin and the Soviet Government had little or no control over German decisions they had a firm grip over their own country. Since 1939 the whole economy and particularly the war industry had been called upon to produce more and faster, while the armed forces had undergone severe jolts as a result of a new training programme, new ranking system and several reorganisations. There had been an impressive improvement in industry. The standard of education of directors in the war industry was raised, 'particularly since 1940, the shop foreman has been raised to a figure of major importance'.⁶³ However, during the February conference in his report Malenkov said (16 February)

A situation should not be tolerated where a director, wishing to excuse himself for the poor work of his firm, continually refers to the fact that his orders were not fulfilled although they were correct and were given in time.⁶⁴

No official attempt was made at correlating the harsh demands put on the industry and the armed forces with the political aim of these moves. Indeed, there were many private consultations between

62. Guderian, op.cit., p.143; according to Guderian during the visit of the Soviet delegations the Germans suspected for the first time that the Russians might possess 'better and heavier tanks than we do'; see also KTB, pp.335-336, 30 March, 1941. Information about a good heavy tank with a 47 mm. gun and a small number of a giant tank of 42-45 t. with a 100 mm. gun.

63. D. Granick, Management of the Industrial Firm, pp.32-33,43.

64. Ibid., p.29.

commanders in the field⁶⁵ and some exchange of ideas between the military High Command and Stalin.⁶⁶ These seemed neither to change the political line, nor yet the propaganda line in the armed forces. 'Our government was hesitant' wrote Meretskoy.⁶⁷ The main link, that should have turned political propaganda, military training and industrial productivity into some kind of operational readiness, was missing - there was no mention of any 'enemy'.⁶⁸

Without a definite 'enemy' it was well nigh impossible to convey to managers of industry and to soldiers alike any sense of urgency. On the contrary, since Germany was the object of 'appeasement', concentrations of German troops and reconnaissance flight of German planes had to be explained not as hostile acts - a fact that was quite clear to every sensible soldier along the border - but as

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65. K.K. Rokossovskii, Soldatskii Dolg, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1972, pp. 8-9. A conversation between Rokossovskii, I.I. Fedyuninskii, S.M. Kondrusev and F.V. Komarov. All participants felt that war was approaching. Rokossovskii and Fedyuninskii planned some co-ordination of activities between their respective units in a case of war; see also Meretskoy, op.cit., pp.203-205. Conversations with Major-General Zakharov, Major-General Malinovskii, Colonel-General Pavlov, Chief of Air Force, I.I. Kopets and Air Force officers in an air-field in the Baltic MD; also Bagramyan, op.cit., p.63, conversation between Bagramyan and Purkaev, also Fedyuninskii, op.cit., p.12, a conversation with Rokossovskii.
66. A.A. Lobachev, Trudnymi dorogami, Moscow, 1960, p.127. Kirponos letter to Stalin; see also R. Malinovskii, 'Dvatsatiletie nachala Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny', VIZ, No.6, 1961, pp.6-7; also, I.V. Tyulenev, Cherez tri voiny, Moscow, 1960, p.140; also, Meretskoy, op.cit., p.204. Conversation with Stalin and Timoshenko; also, Zhukov, op.cit., pp.249-251. Telephone conversation between Timoshenko, and Stalin on 13th June, 1941; conversation between Timoshenko, Zhukov and Stalin on 14th June, 1941; conversation between Timoshenko, Zhukov, Vatutin and Stalin on 21st June, 1941.
67. Meretskoy, op.cit., p.206.
68. Nekrich, op.cit., p.131, see also, Yu.P. Petrov, Partinoe Stroitel'stvo v Sovetskoii armii i flote (1919-1961), Voenizdat, 1964, p.335, particularly Zhdanov's view of the Soviet propaganda line taken in the first half of 1941.

German war activities against Great Britain. This explanation which was carried by Party workers even on 21 June, 1941⁶⁹ was not only utterly confusing but also served the German policy of 'disinformation'. Thus the armoured forces were called upon to intensify their training, to master their new machines because there was a war situation in Europe, while unspecified 'Capitalists' and 'Imperialists' were threatening the Soviet Union, but they were not allowed to deploy near the border, nor to conduct in these regions any exercises.

After the debate during the December meeting the plan for reorganisation and training of the armoured forces and the artillery seemed clear and straightforward. Some of the theoretical problems concerning the tasks of tanks and the aims of armoured forces in a modern war, were resolved. Despite Kulik's protests it was agreed that the tank is a mobile weapon with a high rate of fire-power, and that the armoured forces could come to their own only in mass formations. In theory modernisation had carried the day; in practice the pitiable state of obsolescent machines jeopardized the future of the new training and rearmament programmes. The potential manifested by the qualities of the new T-34 medium tank and the new KV heavy tank was nullified by the small quantities of these tanks. Whereas the new operational ideas which had been aired in December were partially based on the capability of the T-34 and the KV, commander and soldiers on the exercise grounds were not given the opportunity to master the new machines.

69. Bor'ba za Sovetskuyu Pribaltiku, p.46.

The Red Army: Armour and Artillery

At the beginning of 1941, the situation of the armoured forces was deplorable as a result of arbitrary changes in military policy in the years 1938-40. These and the disorientation in military thought as a consequence of the purges left the armoured forces in disarray. The incorporation of new tanks into older formations was a long process, but time was running short - as the December meeting persistently emphasised. Timoshenko's idea after he became commissar was to reverse the 21st November, 1939 decision concerning the mechanised corps. When he assumed office the transition from corps formation to that of division was in full swing. However on 9th June, 1940, the November decision of the Main Military Soviet was finally revoked and Timoshenko authorised the formation of nine mechanised corps and twenty armoured brigades for infantry close support. The role of the armoured forces was extensively discussed during the December meeting and as soon as Zhukov became CGS with the backing of Timoshenko they set out together to enhance the pace of reorganisation of the armoured forces. In addition to the nine mechanised corps which were in process of formation they pushed through a plan [in March 1941] to form another twenty mechanised corps.⁷⁰ The plan was put out for

70. Kommunist, No.12, 1968, p.65; see also Meretskov, op.cit., p. 201; also Anfilov, op.cit., p.107, also P.A. Rotmistrov, Vremya i Tanki, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1972, pp.85-87. An account of the reasons for the radical changes and frequent re-organising of the armoured forces by one of the Soviet outstanding tank commanders of the Second World War and a leading theoretician in the field of armoured warfare. Marshal Rotmistrov is the author of several important articles and an Editor of Istroiya Voennogo Iskusstva, Moscow, 1963.

discussion on 3rd February, 1941, merely three days after Zhukov had assumed his new post as CGS. Such an undertaking was obviously beyond the capacity of Soviet industry at the time. Meretskov who was then in charge of combat training did not believe in the Timoshenko-Zhukov plan, preferring to see the old formations reinforced by whatever new machines industry was capable of producing. According to Meretskov's calculation a full complement of mechanised corps as envisaged by Timoshenko-Zhukov could not be achieved before 1943, but even optimistic forecasting in February, 1941, could not maintain that the Soviet Union would stay out of the war after 1942. The result of the dispute between Meretskov on the one hand and Timoshenko and Zhukov on the other was a compromise. A great effort was made to complete the formation of nine mechanised corps whereas formations equipped with old models were only slightly reinforced with new machines.

Although the old models of the BT series - BT-5, BT-7, BT-7M - paved the way for the development of better machines, they bore the marks of earlier stages of development. Some of the BT-5s were armed with 76.2 mm. guns and were meant to support attacking tanks. The size of their turret did not allow for both radio equipment and heavy load of shells and the designers had to compromise between 115 shells for tanks with no radio equipment and 72 shells for tanks with radio equipment. Later models of the BT-5 were equipped with the M-17T and the M-5 engines which were both modifications of aircraft powerplants.⁷¹ Later models of BT-7 had an armour of 20 mm.

71. V.D. Mostovenko, Tanki, (Ocherk iz istorii zarozhdeniya i razvitiya bronetankovoi tekhniki), Moscow, Voenizdat, 1958, pp. 88-89. This is the standard work on the development of Soviet AFVs (armoured fighting vehicles). T. Milsom, Russian Tanks 1900-1970, London, Arms and Armour Press, Lionel Leventhal Ltd., 1970, pp.56-58.

on the front and 15 mm. on the turret which also became conical. BT-7M was equipped with a diesel engine. Far too light were the tanks of the T series; T-26 was armed with a 37 mm. gun and a machinegun, its body armour was 15 mm., roof - 10 mm. and bottom - 6 mm. T-28 medium tank was armed with a 76.2 mm. gun, three or four 7.62 mm. machineguns in three turrets. It developed a speed of only 37 kmh, and its radius of operation was only 220 km.⁷² By June 1940, the T-34 designed by a group headed by M.I. Koshkin and the KV tanks designed by a group headed by Zh. Ya. Kotin went into mass production after they had been put to a rigorous test both on the Khalkhin Gol and in the Finnish War. Even in its first configuration - officially the A-1 - the T-34 was a formidable machine: following a decision taken in August 1939 the T-34 was designed as an only track tank; its front turret armour - 75 mm. turret sides 45 mm.. It was armed with the long barrelled 76.2 gun of 41.5 length calibre and three 7.62 mm. DT machineguns. Its cross-country speed was 55 kmh and its range 250 miles. It was electro-welded and was fitted with periscopes. However its serial production started in June 1940 which fact explains why at the beginning of 1941 there were very few T-34s tanks actually ready for action. The KV was a heavy tank of 47.5t., armed with a 76.2 mm. gun and four machineguns. Despite its heavy weight it could reach a speed of 35 kmh. Although the first KV tanks were delivered to the armed forces during December 1939, they started to

72. V.D. Mostovenko, op.cit., pp.95-97 for further technical specification.

arrive in some quantity only during the second half of 1940.⁷³

On May day the Red Army paraded its might in Red Square. Kiev MD had its own military parade. The artillery was very impressive and there were many tanks, endless columns of them, but:

Only an experienced eye could see the multitude of obsolete tanks ---- The new, later renowned 'thirty fours' and KV appeared in the parade in very small numbers. Not because there were only few of them in the district. There were enough to take part in the parade, but unfortunately these machines had only recently been supplied to the troops and the tank crews had not yet mastered enough experience in driving them.⁷⁴

The new tanks were incorporated into the existing or reorganised units but their crews as well as the armoured force commanders, had no experience in command and control of even medium sized formations, let alone combat experience with large formations.⁷⁵ Shortcomings were revealed during exercises in the Kiev MD. Tank drivers proved themselves extremely incompetent even at the end of May (the 27th), many of them having had only three hours on their new machines. The

73. The T-34 opposite number Panzerkampfwagen III/Ausführung F (Type 5/ZW) in comparison had front turret armour - 30 mm., side turret - 30 mm., armament - 37 mm. L/45 gun and two 7.92 mm., MG-34 machineguns; maximum road speed - 40 kmh, range - cross country - 95 km. It had a petrol engine. See P.A. Rotmistrov, op.cit., pp.62-64 and Mostovenko, op.cit., pp.108-110 for technical specifications of the T-34 and the KV.

74. Bagramyan, op.cit., pp.60-61.

75. KTB, p.382, 26th April, 1941. According to Krebs report there was an acute shortage of commanders. Regiments are commanded by young Majors and Divisions by Colonels, p.397, 6th May, 1941. Krebs reports that Russian commanders are really poor. [... ausgesprochen schlecht]; see also, General der Eisenbahntuppen. Die russische Panzerwaffe, Verteiler für GenStdH O Qu IV Abt. Fremde Heere Ost (IIa) 28th April, 1941.

crews were far better in firing their guns than in driving the tanks. During the May exercises many tanks were put out of action for lack of spare parts and poor repair facilities. Maintenance technology was primitive and did not provide efficient service.⁷⁶ Shortage of spare parts for old models and poor maintenance remained with the armoured forces throughout June. The first was the result of the shifting of industry to the new models, the second was due to lack of expert technicians for the new machines and shortage of mobile servicing facilities on a range compatible with the size of the armoured forces. By June the armoured force comprised about 20,000 machines of all types of which 508 were KV and 967 T-34⁷⁷ in the five western districts. Of the older tanks which were still the backbone of the force 29% needed a complete overhaul, 44% needed partial repair and only 27% were in reasonable condition. However, mechanised corps were kept at some distance from the border for political and tactical

76. VIZ, No.4, 1967, pp.15-16.

77. M.V. Zakharov, 'Stranitsy istorii sovetskikh vooruzhennykh sil nakanune Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny 1939-41' Voprosy istorii, No.5, 1970, p.35. This source quotes the figure 1861 for both T-34 and KV at the beginning of the war; see also, Bor'ba za Sovetskuyu Pribaltiku, p.43. According to this source, on the eve of the war there were in Baltic MD altogether 1150 tanks of which only 105 were new models; also Anfilov, op.cit., p.95, which quotes the figure of 1684 tanks along the Western border, of which 1500 were T-34 and KV; see also KTB, p.411, 14th May, 1941. It is interesting to note that Halder mentions a bottleneck in Germany's armoured machines production programme. [Panzerkampfwagen-programm.]; also P.A. Rotmistrov, op.cit., pp.62-63, for Rotmistrov's opinion about the high ratio of light tanks in the armoured forces; also p.83 for figures of T-34 and KV in the forces.

reasons.⁷⁸ Whereas infantry could be brought close to the border in silence at the dead of night, it was impossible for mechanised units as long as the policy of 'no provocation' was in force. The mechanised corps were moved from interior districts westward and from their location in the western district forward but they often arrived without their tanks and artillery,⁷⁹ because the Soviet military at the time was of the opinion that after the beginning of hostilities there would be enough time to mobilise. Until such time there were no heavy transporters to carry the tanks, which were scarce anyway, and no lorries to carry fuel and lubricants as those were tied to the Five Year Plan.

Even the original nine corps were not equipped with the new models by June, 1941; the other 20 about which a decision had been taken in March, 1941, were only beginning to take shape.⁸⁰

Although still far from perfect, Soviet artillery equipment and organisation by contrast made a somewhat better showing.

78. Bor'ba za Sovetskuyu Pribaltiku, p.93; see also, Bagramyan, op.cit., p.64. Commanders who complained that they were short of men and equipment received the standard reply that it would all be arranged after mobilisation was started; see also KTB, p.345, 4th April, 1941. German intelligence believed that a newly formed armoured corps of three divisions was stationed near Leningrad; also, p.382, 26th April, 1941. According to Krebs report there were gaping holes in Soviet units as far as material was concerned. Krebs also reported four armoured groups of various strength in Bessarabia, in and west of Zhitomir, Vilna and Pskov.

79. K.K. Rokossovskii, op.cit., p.9.

80. P.A. Rotmistrov, op.cit., p.88. According to Rotmistrov more than 15,000 T-34 and KV tanks were needed to form the new 20 mechanized corps which had been planned, whereas industry could produce during 1941 only about 5,500. In addition to tanks there was need for transporting carriers, logistics and servicing equipment.

Artillery

Based on a long tradition dating back to Peter the Great, Soviet artillery was mechanically up to the demands of war, as far as was known up to 1940. Indeed, the experience of the Spanish Civil War, the incidents in the Far East and the Finnish War had not demonstrated any major flaw in Soviet artillery doctrine. However, the limitations of these encounters owing to their duration, the standard of technology and the peculiarity of terrain had not taxed the artillery too heavily. Although significant lessons were learned from air-battles over Spain and considerable numbers of aircraft took part in air-battles over Khalkhin Gol in both cases the air-force was not a dominant factor. Consequently AA artillery had not benefited from these experiences. As for the Finnish war, since the Finns had an insignificant air-force and armoured force, conclusions concerning the artillery were drawn mainly based on heavy fortified static defence. The broken terrain of the Finnish battle-field, criss-crossed with ravines, swamps and covered with groves brought to the fore the need for high trajectory weapons.⁸¹ Whereas in 1936 B.I. Shavyrin's design bureau was closed because mortars were discounted, in late 1940 their production was given high priority.⁸²

81. K.P. Kazakov, Vsegda s pekhotoi vseгда s tankami, Moscow, voenizdat, 1969, p.9.

82. IVOV, 1960, Vol.I, p.453. Three heavy mortars were developed and produced during 1938-1939: 82 mm. as a standard weapon of a battalion; 107 mm. and 120 mm. as a standard weapon of a regiment; see also Zhukov, op.cit., pp.213-214. According to Zhukov in the period 1st January 1939-22nd June 1941 the Army received 52.407 mortars and 29.637 guns, [tank guns not included]. By June 1941 the Red Army had more mortars than the German army; also, Anfilov, op.cit., p.96, for the changing approach to the production of mortars. According to this source by 1st June 1941 the Red Army had 14.200 82 mm. and 3.800 120 mm. mortars.

Having solved some of the production problems which had faced the mortar industry when it was resumed late in 1940, the Red Army was provided by the end of the first half of 1941 with 13,000 82 mm. and 3000 120 mm. mortars. Altogether, despite his interest in all aspects of military industry, Stalin definitely had a great predilection for artillery.⁸³

At the time of the December meeting Marshal G.I. Kulik was the head of Main artillery direction of the Red Army - GAU (Glavnoe artilleriskoy upravleniye Krasnoi Armii). His deputy was Colonel-General N.N. Voronov, and the Chief of Staff from 14 June 1941 was Colonel-General N.D. Yakovlev. GAU could boast a very impressive arsenal. Still in service were the improved old models 1910/30, but the bulk of the armoury was the new models 152 mm. Howitzer - model 1937, 122 mm. Howitzer - model 1938, 76 mm., and 210 mm. guns, 280 mm. mortar, 305 mm. Howitzer, 37 mm. automatic and 85 mm. AA guns - all 1939 models. Not only were these new models but some of them were either dual purpose like the 85 mm. AA gun which could be used as an A.T. gun as well, or dual purpose like the 76 mm. gun designed by V.G. Grabin which with few modifications was used as a standard tank-gun. Unfortunately the production of the 76 mm. gun was stopped in May 1941 in favour of guns and heavy machineguns which were deemed necessary for F.A., the armoured forces and A.T. guns.⁸⁴ Of the

83. B.L. Vannikov, 'Oboronnaya Promyshlennost SSSR Nakanune voiny', Voprosy istorii, No.10, 1968, p.117'... V otnoshenii Stalin k artillerii i artilleriskoi promyshlennosti chuvstvovalas osobaya simpatiya.' Zhukov, op.cit., p.214 also made the same remark. Before and during the war B.L. Vannikov was Commissar for Armament.

84. M.V. Zakharov, 'Stranitsy istorii sovetskikh vooruzhennykh sil Nakanune Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny 1939-1941' Voprosy istorii No.5, 1970, p.33. Note: F.A. - Fortified Area.

smaller calibres there were the 45 mm. anti-tank gun, modernized in 1940, and the 45 mm., 37 mm., 25 mm. AA automatic guns. The 37 mm. was produced in two versions - one mounting 4 barrels with a fire power of 400 shells per minute and a one barrel naval version.⁸⁵

As far as number of barrels are concerned the Red Army was moderately well-equipped although demands were growing with the growth of the army and with the widening scope of artillery theory. These in turn put heavy pressure to bear on both gun and ammunition production which were lagging behind. Soviet artillery theory in 1940 reached new heights of sophistication, designating for the artillery ever more complicated tasks, which included,

The tasks of regimental artillery in various stages of the attack.

- a. During the approach/march.
- b. During the artillery barrage preparing the attack.
- c. During the attack of infantry and tanks.
- d. During the struggle in the depth of the defence.⁸⁶

Following (c) and (d) it is clear that in each of these stages the artillery is allocated accurate targets which have to be engaged exactly on time as otherwise friendly forces might be struck. The plan for Army artillery was so elaborate and complicated that it could not be conceived without high mobility and reliable communication. The difficulties of the artillerymen were emphasized by the

85. N.E. Nosovskii, 'Nadezhnyi arsenal vooruzheniya', Voprosy istorii, No.11, 1970, p.117.

86. V.D. Grendal, 'Artilleriya v osnovnykh vidakh boya', Voprosy taktiki, pp.209-210; see also Anfilov, op.cit., p.116 for Artillery doctrine of the Red Army.

fact that signalling was effected by either visual means or by telephone, both means being easily disrupted in a battle environment. From a tactical point of view lack of sophisticated signalling reduced the 'depth' of artillery batteries and compelled them to fight as a one line echelon in order not to hit each other, or any other friendly forces. Such primitive tactics made detection of the batteries easier.

No less demanding were the tasks of the artillery in defence:

As the defence is relatively less saturated with artillery the control of this artillery must allow possibilities for concentrated effort (manevragnem) towards these means or forces of the enemy which might at some stage of the battle present the most dangerous threat to the defence ...⁸⁷

Both in the offensive and in defence the artillery had to be flexible in engaging several targets simultaneously, keeping in touch with rapidly changing situations and agile in using various types of skills. Not the least of the worries being the artillery inexperience in the use of live ammunition and the acute lack of transport which made flexible use of artillery an impossible task.⁸⁸ Since the Finnish War simulation of real battle conditions in training had carried the day, yet constant mention of live ammunition indicates that though this practice was no longer exceptional it had not yet been well-established.

The December meeting was an attempt to sum up Soviet military experience and to assess the validity of the doctrine based on this experience. The criticism directed against the artillery was aimed

87. A.K. Sivkov, 'Taktika artilleriya', Voprosy Taktiki, p.222.

88. IVOV 1960, Vol.I, p.453.

at the inadaquacy of the anti air-craft artillery. It was slow, unco-ordinated and scattered, the reasons being high priority for the production of other types of artillery and inefficient locating and signalling devices. Failing to locate approaching enemy planes the AA guns proved too slow and too few to cope. Marshal Kulik who was aware of this failing and very keen to improve the performance of AA artillery completely failed to appreciate the significance of the tank. Semper fidelis, he stuck to the offensive by the infantry arm but emphasized defence in air and in armoured warfare. Indeed anti-tank warfare both in theory and in practice was very late in appearing. In Timoshenko's instructions for artillery training during the summer of 1940 there was no specific mention of anti-tank artillery since they were based on the experience of the Spanish and the Finnish wars where combat was against fortified areas, more a siege than a war of manoeuvre.⁸⁹ But this trend had started to change after the reversal of the decision to do away with mechanized corps. Marshal Kulik was fighting a last ditch battle against the tank during the December meeting. By that time the evidence of German success in armoured warfare was overwhelming. In only one important point was theory still toying with past experience - AT artillery was still instructed to deploy only in places impassable for tanks.⁹⁰

Artillery Field Regulations 1937, part 2 (Boevoi ustav artillerii RKKA, 1937, chart 2) which was in force until 22 June 1941 instructed 136 guns per one kilometer. On the eve of the war the

89. Anfilov, op.cit., p.134.

90. Ibid.

Red Army had 67.335 pieces of artillery (50 mm. mortars not included)⁹¹ which were partially organic i.e. formed the artillery of various units and partially organized as the Reserve of the High Command - RGK (Rezerva Glavnogo Komandovaniya).⁹² The RGK comprised 74 artillery regiments of which 60 were Howitzer and 14 - guns, altogether 8% of all the artillery of the ground forces.⁹³ A Gun Regiment consisted of 48 122 mm. guns and 152 mm. Howitzer; a Gun Regiment of high force (bolshoi moshchnosti) of 24 152 mm. guns; a Howitzer Regiment of 48 152 mm. Howitzer, and Howitzer Regiment of high force of 24 203 mm. Howitzer. The armament of an independent division of high force consisted of 210 mm. guns, 280 mm. mortars and 305 mm. Howitzer, altogether five pieces. The organic artillery of every infantry division was 66 82 mm. and 120 mm. mortars.

Since 1934 experiments with rockets had been carried out under the roof of the Rocket Scientific Research Institute - RNII (Reaktivnyi nauchno issledovatel'skii institut). By 1938 the results of the first experiment with 'rail-mounted artillery' (rel'sovaya artilleriya) were demonstrated in front of the military. A

91. M.V. Zakharov, Stranitsy Istorii ... Voprosy istorii, No.5, 1970, p.34, quotes the figure 71.000 artillery pieces in the Red Army [22nd June, 1941].

92. Marshal K. Kazakov, 'Sovershenstvovanie Artilleriskogo Nastupleniya', VIZ, No.11, 1970, pp.33-34. Under the pressure of battle and as a result of heavy losses infantry units were left very soon after the beginning of the war, with only the organic artillery.

93. Anfilov, op.cit., p.117.

fragmentation - explosive rocket 1.7 m. in length had been developed by B.S. Petropavlovsky, the engineer G.E. Langemak had been working on the development of a credible launcher, and V.A. Artem'ev had solved the problem of stability. For long, frustrating months no satisfactory solution had been found to the innumerable problems poised by the revolutionary weapon. Although it had already been experimented with as an air-to-ground weapon during the Khalkhin Gol incident in late 1939 it had only got official approval on May 1940 designated BM-13 (Boevaya mashina, s kalibrom Minyi v 13.2 cm). By that time the length of the rocket had been enlarged to 5 m. and the launcher, truck-mounted, could launch 16 rockets in a salvo instead of 24 in December 1938.⁹⁴

BM-13 was tested operatively in November 1940 using seven launchers. Apparently it had not yet been completed because as late as March 1941 a large group of scientists in RNII were given state subsidies to work on and further develop the weapon. BM-13 was finally approved for series production on 21st June 1941. The first BM-13 battery under the command of Captain I.A. Flerov was formed only on 28th June 1941 still using 5 of the original 7 launchers which had been allocated in November 1940 for operative experiments.⁹⁵

In the months following the December meeting the artillery went on training, occasionally using live ammunition, but then mostly in range firing and only at a considerable distance from the western border. When the Red Army started to call up reservists at the end

94. K.P. Kazakov, Artilleriya i Rakety, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, pp.69-74.

95. K.P. Kazakov, Vsegda s Pekotoi Vsegda s Tankami, p.11.

of March and to move units from inland closer to the border they were either not equipped with artillery in the first place or else ordered to leave their heavy equipment behind while they went off the trains and marched at night to their new locations.

In April training of artillery had intensified. Commander courses were conducted on a large scale while whole artillery regiments were pulled out of their locations and sent away inland for training. Whether appreciated or not British warnings combined with Soviet intelligence reports about heavy German concentration along the borders to instill some urgency into military preparation. On 26th April an order was issued to form 10 anti-tank artillery brigades, five of which were formed in Kiev MD. They were to form part of RGK. The bold line of theory which had prevailed over the opposition during the December meeting, clearly substantiated by German success in armoured warfare, won the day and commanders were ordered to train their AT brigades and prepare them within a month. The soldiers were put to a rigorous training programme - 8-10 hours a day and 2-3 hours night training. An attempt was made to select for these rather specialist formations soldiers with a high standard of education and some technical qualifications. These formidable formations could not be operated by people of lesser qualifications. They were completely mechanised and could produce a tremendous volume of fire.⁹⁶ The concept behind these brigades was to create some counter to a thrust of tanks mass formation which so far had overwhelmed the defensive deployment of all the European armies. The brigade was a

96. IVOV, 1960, Vol.I, p.457; see also, Moskalenko, op.cit., p.23.

COMMANDER

I REGIMENT

II REGIMENT

BATTALION
OF
TRANSPORT

BATTALION
OF
TRANSPORT

BATTALION
OF
ENGINEERS

BATTALION
OF
ENGINEERS

BATTERY
12 GUNS
76 MM.

BATTERY
12 GUNS
76 MM.

BATTERY
12 GUNS
76 MM.

BATTERY
12 GUNS
76 MM.

BATTERY
12 GUNS
107 MM.

BATTERY
12 GUNS
107 MM.

BATTERY AA.
6 GUNS
85 MM.

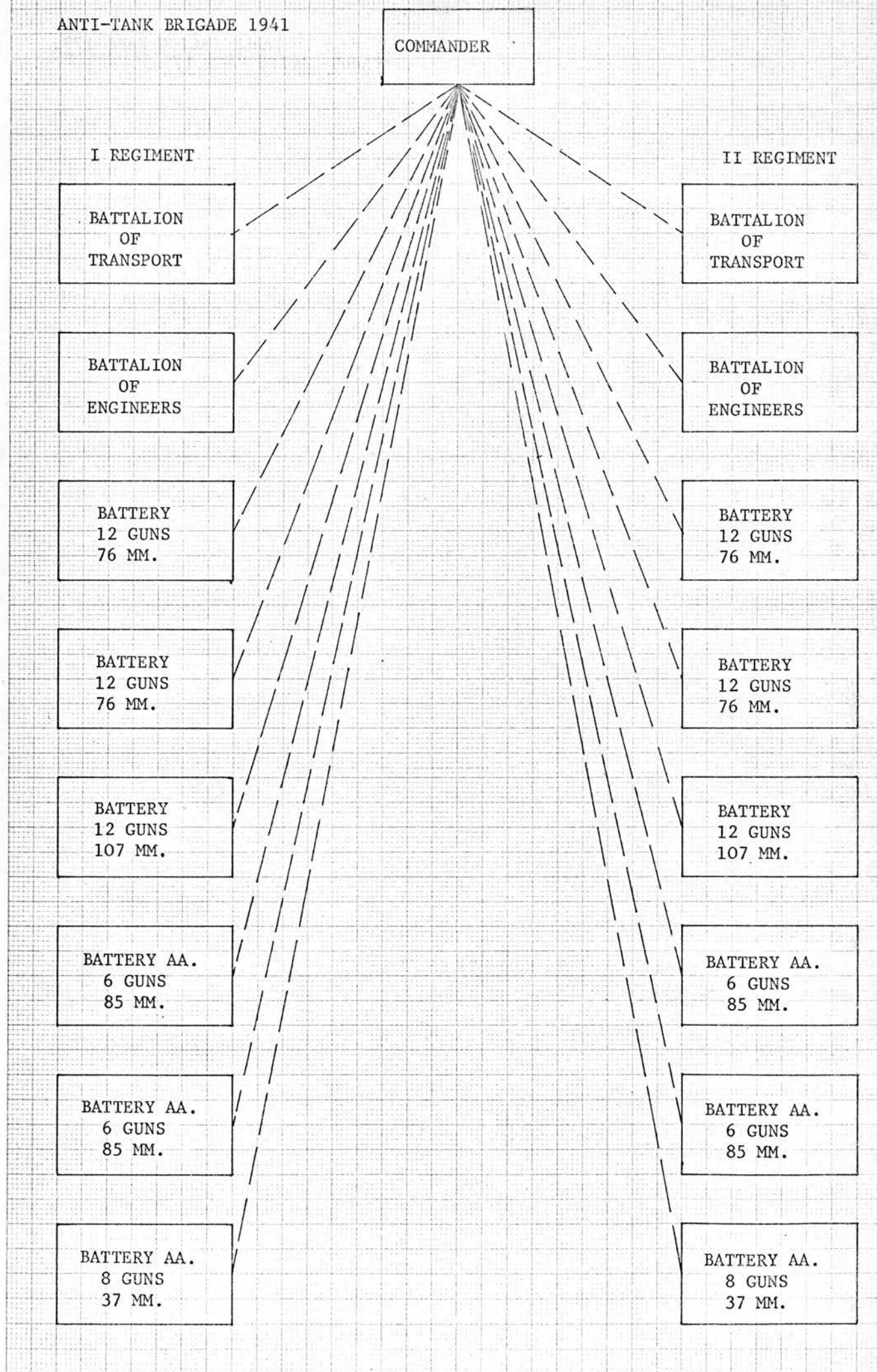
BATTERY AA.
6 GUNS
85 MM.

BATTERY AA.
6 GUNS
85 MM.

BATTERY AA.
6 GUNS
85 MM.

BATTERY AA.
8 GUNS
37 MM.

BATTERY AA.
8 GUNS
37 MM.



large, mobile and well equipped unit. With six out of its 12 Artillery Battalions (division) armed with AA guns, the brigade could defend itself against air-raids as well as gainst tank attacks. 4 out of the AA Battalions were equipped with 85 mm. dual purpose guns. Both the regular 76 mm. anti-tank gun and certainly the 85 mm. AA gun could pierce any German tank which had been used by Germany until the first half of 1941.

Navy

The navy emerged from the purges in a state of disarray. It had several ships in hand and many others under construction, but due to the lack of design experience and because of the small volume of shipbuilding industry Soviet negotiators were pacing the corridors of German, American and French (earlier on also Italian) ministries for ship-building contracts, turrets and fire control systems. Although they did not bring home brilliant contracts, they at least were impressed with trends in ship-construction of the traditional maritime powers. Furthermore, they were supplied with designs blueprints by tenderers.⁹⁷ By the end of 1939 beginning of 1940 the Soviet Navy had some ready made answers, to which it had not yet formulated the right questions. The answers were imposed by a combination of political instructions, assessment of construction currents in other navies and estimates of the capability of the existing Soviet units. The questions - geographical, strategic, climatic and tactical - began to take shape under the impact of experience in the Far East, the Finnish

97. Edward P. Von Der Porten, The German Navy In World War Two, London, Pan Books Limited, 1972, p.24.

War and the rudiments of the War for the Atlantic Ocean which had just begun to rage.

The Russians, true to their philosophy of a long drawn out confrontation of massive forces, did not tend to approach naval operations in an adventurous way. Admittedly they paid tribute to forays since 'foray is one of the most advantageous form of activities'.⁹⁸ The history of naval warfare knew many examples of successful forays. Modern technology of which the Russians were short in 1940-1941 but by no means ignorant, made daring blows at enemy installations and convoys possible since 'contemporary fast surface ships facilitated the conduct of scouting operations'.⁹⁹ However,

For foray operations nowadays it is necessary to use cruisers, destroyers, torpedo cutters in coordination with reconnaissance planes and bombers as well as submarines.¹⁰⁰

Whereas the battleship still occupied prominent place in maritime theory it was not assigned the role of the single hunter in Soviet theoretical thinking. The Russians were impressed by the extensive construction of mammoth ships in many foreign dockyards. In 1937 they believed that:

98. I have used Voprosy strategii and Voprosy taktiki as sources for Soviet theories and Naval doctrine; see for instance Voprosy strategii, p.729.

99. V.A. Belli, K.V. Penzin, Boevie deistviya v Atlantike i na Sredizemnom more 1939-1945 gg, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1967, pp.192-193. In analyzing the first two years of war (1939-1941) the authors note the significance of the attack on convoys and communication lines by superior gun fire of a big ship like the Bismarck. However they emphasize the decisive role of air force in naval operations. For direct reference see Voprosy strategii, p.729.

100. Ibid.

.... in fact the theory that the battleship's days have passed because of the development of the submarines and aviation, was refuted.¹⁰¹

But lack of facilities, poor technology and insurmountable lists of priorities taught them better. By 1940 the world was wiser after almost a year of war at sea which was ended by the dramatic sinking of Graf Spee and the battle of Narvik. The lessons of this period dove-tailed with the most progressive part of Soviet Military and naval erudition, the gist of which was co-ordination and co-operation. Indeed these themes were prominent in Soviet military thinking.

Nowadays a single surface ship is used without co-ordination with other forces only under exceptional conditions.

Even the heaviest ships are dependent on the co-operation of lighter forces assigned to their protection.¹⁰²

Yet co-ordination within the unit is not enough, there need be:

Co-ordination between Navy and air force in attacking enemy positions on the coast; and between navy and coast artillery in defending a coast.¹⁰³

The main tasks of the navy were believed in 1939 to have been:

1. Destroy the enemy fleet in parts.
2. Struggle for sea communications, that is defend its own military and commercial routes and cut those of the enemy.

101. Voprosy taktiki, p.432.

102. Ibid., p.456.

103. Ibid., p.464.

3. Struggle for the coasts, that is protect its own coast from enemy invasion and carry the war on to enemy territory at sea.
4. Support the army flanks, having been put out to sea, by helping the army offensive and defence against enemy attack from the sea.¹⁰⁴

As for carrying the war on to enemy territory:

Operation against enemy bases is of great significance, when it is carried out systematically in certain conditions creating for the enemy such a situation that he may find staying in harbour more dangerous than being out at sea.¹⁰⁵

Notwithstanding theory the commanders of the navy at the end of 1940, beginning of 1941 faced serious practical problems. True, since 1933 they had had the rudiments of naval presence in the Arctic Sea; indeed, since the Finnish War they had had a firm grip over the Gulf of Finland while the White Sea canal facilitated movement from the Baltic Sea northward; no doubt the Black Sea Fleet was growing and the submarines of the Far Eastern Fleet had the Japanese worried. Yet the problem had always been how to operate these four separate fleets as an effective force for defence and if possible for offensive operations.

On 30 December, 1937 a Separate Naval Commissariat was

104. Voprosy Strategii, p.725; see also V.A. Belli, K.V. Penzin, op.cit., pp.193-195.

105. Voprosy Strategii, p.728.

established.¹⁰⁶ P.A. Smirnov was nominated People's Commissar of the VMF (VOENNO-MORSKOGO FLOTA). But the main arbiter of Naval affairs was the Main Naval Soviet (Glavnyi voennyi sovet voenno-morskogo flota), whose president was Zhdanov.¹⁰⁷ On 27 April, 1939 Admiral N.G. Kuznetsov replaced Smirnov as People's Commissar for the Navy and Admiral I.S. Issakov was nominated Chief of Staff. Whether this separation was necessary, or beneficial is an arguable point, but it certainly created difficulties between the army and the navy. Zhukov repeated 'For the sake of historical authenticity' (v tselyakh istoricheskoi dostovernosti), that neither Timoshenko nor he were invited to Stalin when naval questions were discussed.¹⁰⁸ Later, the navy issued its own orders concerning over-flying enemy planes.¹⁰⁹ The main difference was that the navy orders were applicable only in particular places whereas the same orders issued to the army were generally applied.

106. Collective authorship, Boevoi put sovetskogo voenno-morskogo flota, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1967 [first edition - 1964], p.582. I have used this book for chronological data and for figures about the strength of the fleets; see also J. Erickson, op.cit., p.472.

107. Ibid., p.476.

108. Zhukov, op.cit., pp.221-222.

109. N.G. Kuznetsov, Nakanune, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1966, p.314. Kuznetsov who was at the time Commissar of the Navy claimed that on 3rd March, 1941 the Navy issued an order to fire on German airplanes, but that after a meeting with Stalin and Beria this order was changed and fighters were instructed to pursue and to force German planes down; see also A.G. Golovko, Vmeste s Flotom, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1960, pp.16-17. A.G. Golovko was at the time commander of the Northern Fleet; see also, V. Achkasov, 'Krasnoznamennyi Baltiskii Flot Nakanune Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny', VIZ, No.10, 1970, pp.38,41.

After the beginning of the war in 1939 it became clear to the Soviet leadership that an 'ocean going force' was but wishful thinking. A steel-consuming investment like a navy centred round battleships was incompatible with far reaching plans to expand the armoured forces, and the artillery.¹¹⁰ Second best was a defensive force based on submarines, destroyers, mine-sweepers, mine-layers and fast torpedo boats. Indeed late in 1939 it was decided to suspend work on all large units whether under construction or in blue-prints and to concentrate on building smaller vessels. During 1940 the navy received 100 new boats, mainly torpedo boats, mine-sweepers and submarines. Under construction were 269 more vessels of all classes up to the size of destroyers while the construction of bigger units slowed down or stopped altogether.¹¹¹ On several occasions hulls of big ships already on the slip were cut and the steel used for the construction of smaller units. However as the construction of ships is a long process and the time from procurement to sea-worthiness, not mentioning crew training, is between several months for the smallest vessels up to three years for the larger, the navy planners could not count in 1940 on many of these 269 boats. Nevertheless as far as sheer numbers were concerned by 1941 the Soviet Union had a formidable navy: 276 submarines - 76 in the Baltic Fleet (34 more under construction); 45 in the Northern Fleet; 68 in the Black Sea Fleet

110. V. Yemel'yanov, 'O Vremeni, O Tovarishchakh, O Sebe, Zapiski Inzhenera', *Novyi Mir*, No.2, February, 1967, pp.97-98. A memoir of a man who took part in the discussions concerning the allocation of steel during 1939-1940.

111. Jürg Meister, *The Soviet Navy*, London, Macdonald, 1972, pp.8-13. Data about Soviet ships and boats which were captured by the Germans incomplete.

(10 more under construction); 87 in the Far East Fleet (7 more under construction).¹¹² The oldest submarines were the D-(Dekabrist) class, six of which were built in 1929. L-(Leninets) class followed shortly afterwards. By 1941 there were about 100 SC class. In 1933 a small submarine M-(Malyutka) class was constructed. This class designed for coastal waters was built in considerable numbers. The S-class oceangoing submarines appeared in 1935 to be followed in 1936 by the K-class. In design and construction many of these boats could compare with any others under the surface but they were lacking in accustic and communication devices, therefore their co-ordination with other boats at sea and with coast command was poor. Communication between submarines and coast command was further hindered by inadequacy of radar stations.¹¹³ Yet the most significant shortcoming was lack of training of the crews; 'the navy commanders were not well prepared

112. Siegfried Breyer, Guide to the Soviet Navy, Annapolis, Maryland, United States Naval Institute, 1970, pp.143-144. The data in both Meister and Breyer's books should be checked against Soviet Sources. For instance Boevoi Put Sovetskogo Voenno-Morskogo Flota, p.288 quotes the figure 65 submarines in the Baltic Fleet; 47 in the Black Sea Fleet (p.368); 15 in the Northern Fleet; see also p.167 for the number of submarines under construction at the beginning of the war. Zhukov, op.cit., p.221, quotes the figure 211 submarines for the whole Soviet Navy at the beginning of the war. (Zhukov, op.cit., English Edition, p.185, quotes the figure 218 submarines) Anfilov, op.cit., p.120, quotes the figure 218, also, Kuznetsov, op.cit., p.300 quotes the figure 218; also, N.P. V'yunenkov, 'Sovetskoe Voenno-Morskoe Iskustvo Nakanune Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny', Morskoi Sbornik, No.6, 1971, p.28, also quotes the figure 211 submarines.

113. V. Achkasov, 'Krasnoznamennyi Baltiskii Flot Nakanune Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny', VIZ, No.10, 1970, p.33.

from an operational and tactical point of view.¹¹⁴ Of surface ships there were three battleships, all Czarist built - the 'Gangut' of the Baltic Fleet launched 7 October 1911; the 'Marat' of the Baltic Fleet, launched 9 September 1911; and the 'Parizhskaya Kommuna', of the Black Sea Fleet, launched 29 June, 1911. Besides the battleships, there were 1 heavy cruiser, 2 medium and 1 light cruiser in the Baltic Fleet, and 3 medium and 3 light ones in the Black Sea Fleet.¹¹⁵ The bulk of the ships were destroyers, torpedo and patrol boats. Apart from sea-going navy there were 5 river flotillas which had already played an important role in the Far East and during tense periods between the Soviet Union and Rumania in 1939-1940. The composition of the surface navy in the light of Russia's geographic and climatic peculiarities ruled out turning the whole Navy into one mail fist fleet. As it was in 1941 each of the fleets found it hard to conduct independent offensive warfare. Quality differences between the units combined with inadequate air cover forced the navy to restrict its range of activity.

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114. V. Achkasov, 'Krasnoznamennyi Baltiskii Flot Nakanune Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny', VIZ, No.10, 1970, p.36, N.13. Only 25% of all Submarine Brigade commanders had by 1941, a commanding experience longer than two years. Among Submarine Division commanders the percentage was somewhat higher, but almost none of the commanders of surface ships had been in command more than two years; see also, IVOV, 1963, Vol.I, p.450; also J. Meister, op.cit., pp.19-20. Meister is of the opinion that the purges destroyed the best part of the Naval command. He maintains that in 1941 only junior officers had the skill necessary for seamanship.
115. Boevoi Put Sovetskogo Voenno-Morskogo Flota, p.288, for figures about the Baltic Fleet; p.367, for figures about the Black Sea Fleet; see also, Achkasov, VIZ, No.10, 1970, p.34. The figures in the text are quoted from J. Meister, op.cit., p.9.

Naval aviation proved to be one of the major stumbling blocks on the way of naval development. The navy commanders were acutely aware of new developments in naval aviation. If other evidence did not suffice, there was British air raid on 11th November 1940 on Taranto to emphasize the point.¹¹⁶ The Soviet Navy traded offensive capabilities for AA defence on board its ships. On several ships torpedo tubes were withdrawn to be replaced by additional 20 and 37 mm. AA guns. As for aircraft the Navy had 2581 planes, 80% of which were old types. Their breakdown was 45.3% fighters, 14% bombers; 9.7% torpedo-carriers; 25% reconnaissance 6% planes for special duties.¹¹⁷ The Baltic Fleet Naval Air Force under the command of Major-General V.V. Yermachenkov had 3 air brigades, one bomber and two fighter, one independent bomber regiment and seven independent squadrons. It still operated many of the MBR-2 of the 1936 vintage. The new machines had just started to arrive. Noteworthy was the scarcity of torpedo-carrier planes. The Black Sea Fleet operated 2 air brigades, one regiment and eleven squadrons. During the Khalkhin Gol incident many of the best pilots were hurriedly taken away from their units and transferred to the Far East. Their absence, although temporary must have had repercussions on training of recruits. Naval air force HQ in Tallin had direct wire communication only with 10th

116. For Soviet assessment of the significance of Air Force in Naval operations see V.A. Belli, K.V. Penzin, *op.cit.*, pp.193-195; see also, N.P. V'yunenkov, 'Sovetskoe Voenno-Morskoe iskusstva nakanune Velikoi, Otechestvennoi voiny', *Morskoi Sbornik*, No.6, 1971, p.30.

117. Anfilov, *op.cit.*, p.120; also Admiral V.F. Tributs, 'Krasnoznamennyi Baltiskii Flot Letom 1941 goda', *Voprosy istorii*, No.2, 1969, p.125. Tributs was commander of the Baltic Fleet from May 1939 to 15th February, 1946; see also, unsigned historical note, *Morskoi Sbornik*, No.8, 1971, p.19 for the breakdown in figures.

bomber brigade and the units in Tallin itself. Communication with other units was effected by what radio traffic there was or by planes.¹¹⁸ Only 20.7% of the Naval Air Force (155 planes) was based on western airfields; another 500 planes were strewn over airfields so far removed from the sea they could not be of any use to the fleet.¹¹⁹

The tradition of the navy's command dated back to Imperial Russia. Despite all the tribulations since the failure of the 'Mathematical Schools' of 1714 the Soviet Government did not have to start from scratch after the revolution. Owing to the rise of the general standard of education and to strict selection 98.2% of all command staff of the navy since 1937 had finished secondary or higher education.¹²⁰ In July 1940 the Main Naval Soviet decided 'to make use of the war experience of the Baltic and the North Fleets for training of the VNF'.¹²¹ The same decree ordered the unification of command, that is curbing the interference of commissars in strictly military decisions. It also emphasized the need for co-ordination between ships, air force, coast defence and land forces. Finally the decree stipulated the need to raise the standard of commanders and specialists, like artillery men.¹²² During December 1940 the navy conducted its own High Command conference. Admiral I.S. Issakov

118. V. Achkasov, VIZ, No.10, 1970, p.35.

119. Yu.A. Panteleev, 'Na Dal'nikn Podstupakh k Leningradu', Voyuet Baltika, Leninzdat, 1964, p.52.

120. Anfilov, op.cit., p.124; see also, Boevoi put sovetskogo voenno-morskogo flota, pp.168-169.

121. IVOV, 1963, Vol.I, p.469.

122. Ibid., p.454.

read the main report which was followed by general discussion.¹²³

The Navy was early in bracing itself for the year 1941. Already on 13th December 1940 the Main Naval Soviet ordered a blackout of all ships. It might have been an uneasy feeling of the Navy HQ that ships are indecently vulnerable being flood-lit in ports; it might also have been a response to systematic German aerial reconnaissance over naval facilities. Rear Admiral Panteleev, Chief of Staff of the Baltic Fleet (KBF) submitted a report that the Germans methodically reconnoitred Libau, Vindau, coastal fortifications, air-fields and ports.¹²⁴ On 15th February 1941, following the blackouts of ships and the Navy's December meeting, the People's Commissar of VMF promulgated a decree No.14750 instructing the navy to defend the coast around each fleet and to parry enemy attack.¹²⁵ Yet even as late as June the main base of the Baltic Fleet in Tallin was fortified enough to resist an attack only from the sea.¹²⁶ On 26th February Kuznetsov and Timoshenko signed a decree ordering all fleets to work out a defence plan in co-ordination with the army.¹²⁷ The problem of co-ordination and training was apparently very much in the mind of Navy commanders since on 4th March 1941 the Main Naval Soviet announced yet again the need for training and preparing commanders. Yet the

123. Anfilov, op.cit., p.147.

124. Yu.A. Panteleev, op.cit., p.49.

125. V. Achkasov, VIZ, No.10, 1970, p.38.

126. Admiral Tributs, Voprosy istorii, No.2, 1969, p.124.

127. Ibid., see also, Panteleev, op.cit., p.51. In the second half of May there were further meetings in Riga and Libau between Naval officers and the command of the Baltic MD to co-ordinate activities.

co-ordination between the navy and the army had not yet been sorted out even at that date and on 19th June 1941 Timoshenko ordered Leningrad, Baltic and Odessa MD's to work out within two days a plan for co-ordination with the Baltic and the Black Sea Fleets, in accordance with the Plan of Defence.¹²⁸

Important as general training and plans might have been, after the end of April the Navy was seized with a sense of urgency. From 30 April on the submarine S-4 was on patrol near the bases of Libau. On 7 May 1941 the KBF was ordered to conduct the following patrols from 8 May on - one destroyer or patrol boat at the mouth of the Gulf of Finland, one submarine at the approach to Irbensk strait and several units on the approaches to Tallin (main basis for KBF) Libau and Khanko. To these measures the following ones were added on 10 May, 1941 - reconnaissance planes went out every day after dawn to patrol the area between Gotland and the Latvian coast and another patrol went out before sunset to the mouth of the Finnish Gulf and thence to the lighthouse of Svenska Biren. In that manner the whole Baltic border was under observation. If the Russians could do very little to prevent German movements in the Baltic Sea the Germans could do very little that would escape notice. Indeed, responding to Germany's heavy troop concentration the Soviet navy reacted by reinforcing its patrols.¹²⁹ On 14th June on top of the already

128. Anfilov, op.cit., p.182.

129. Ibid., p.50. It was indeed difficult to conceal the movements of such ships as the Bismarck which sailed past Libau at the beginning of April and the Hipper which conducted exercises in the region of Memel with three destroyers and five submarines in mid April. Kuznetsov, op.cit., p.316. The deteriorating situation during May.

current patrols the Baltic Fleet added another ship to patrol the strait of Irbensk at night, in the general direction of Riga. It was either to be at anchor or to move around and to keep in touch with patrolling submarines. On 16th June, Admiral Issakov ordered the submarine 'Tshch-299' to the strait of Irbensk and the BTshch-210 to the mouth of the Finnish Gulf. The distance between that degree of preparedness and official alert was bridged on 19th June 1941 when the Naval Commissar ordered operational alert state 'number 2' as from 16.15 hours.¹³⁰ At 17.00 hours on 21st June 1941 the KBF command ordered all its units to be ready for immediate action. The Black Sea Fleet and the North Sea Fleet were put on operational alert 'number 2' on 20th June 1941.¹³¹

On 21 June, 22.00 hours, Admiral Tributs invited his staff and told them that he had just been on the telephone and had been told that he was to expect decisive development. Panteleev alerted the chiefs of the various sections in the Baltic Fleet HQ and they in turn alerted the units. At 23.37 the Baltic Fleet was put in operational state 'number 1'. At 24.00 the Commander of Libau was ordered to send his submarines to Ust-Dvinsk and the Commander of Hangö was ordered to send all his submarines and torpedo boats to Poldiski. At 4.00 the first German bombs were dropped over Tallin.¹³²

130. Boevoi Put Sovetskogo Voenno-Morskogo Flota, p.583.

131. Pogranichnie Voiska, p.576; see also, Admiral Tributs, Voprosy istorii, No.2, 1969, p.125; also Achkasov, VIZ, No.10, 1970, p.38. A remark about the history of the procedure of operational alert which was first worked out in the Pacific Fleet in 1937. p.41 a detailed account of the days 19-22nd June, 1941; also Kuznetsov, op.cit., pp.324-336, an account of the days 19-22nd June as seen by the Commissar of the Navy.

132. Panteleev, op.cit., pp.54-56.

The commander of the Northern Fleet since August, 1940 had been Vice-Admiral A.G. Golovko: its main base was Polyarnyi, its two other bases being Arkhangelsk (the White Sea Naval base) and the Murmansk fortified area.¹³³ The commander of the Baltic Fleet was Vice-Admiral V.F. Tributs: two battleships were anchored in Tallin, the main Baltic Naval base; other units were based in Ust-Dvinsk, Liepaya, Khanko and Poldiski. Kronshtadt was the main rear base. Though, the biggest fleet in the Soviet Navy, it had only four tankers and two water carriers. The Black Sea Fleet came under Vice-Admiral F.S. Oktyabr'skii: its main base was Sevastopol, with some smaller ones in Odessa, Ochakov, Novorossiisk, Nikolaev, Poti and Batum.¹³⁴

Apart from the four fleets there were several flotillas to protect waterways and to support operations along rivers and lakes. Rivers had always been essential for communications and commerce in Imperial Russia and in the Soviet Union. With large investments of money and manpower the waterways were enlarged and improved, facilitating commerce at a time of peace and making them tactically, if not strategically, important in war-time. The flotillas, named after the rivers and the lakes in which they operated, were the following: Flotilla of Amur, base - Khabarovsk, Commander (22 July, 1940 - 29 June, 1943) P.S. Abankin; Flotilla of the Danube, base at the beginning of the war - Nikolaev, Commander (22 June - 16 September,

133. For the History of the Northern Fleet see I.A. Kozlov, V.S. Shlomin, Severnyi Flot, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1966, p.79, see pp. 100-101 for the period 17th-22nd June, 1941. See Voprosy istorii, No.5, 1970, p.40 for some information about Rear-Admiral Golovko; see also B.A. Vainer, Severnyi Flot v Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voyny, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1964, pp.7-10.

134. IVOV, 1960, Vol.I, p.472.

1941) N.O. Abramov;¹³⁵ Flotilla of the Ladoga, base - Shlisselburg, Commander (25 June - 30 June, 1941) V.P. Baranovskii; Flotilla of Pinsk, base - Pinsk, Commander (22 June - 18 September, 1941) D.D. Rogachev; Flotilla of the North Pacific, base - Soviet Harbour Commander (22 June - 13 February, 1941) M.I. Arapov.¹³⁶

Flotillas were organized on an ad hoc basis, formed when a need arose and disbanded when they were no longer necessary. Over the years since 1917 there had been flotillas in all the theatres of war. The bulk of the force was river boats improvised to carry a gun, sometimes a whole T-34 turret, armoured cutters and some smaller vessels.

Air Force

In 1939 when the lessons of Spain had already been taken in, the third Five Year Plan had been well on its way and war in Europe had already become a likelihood, the Soviet Air Force was still beset by industrial and organizational problems of considerable complexity. At the 18th Congress of the All Union Party in March, 1939, Commissar of Defence K.Y. Voroshilov quoted the following figures:

135. I.I. Loktionov, Dunaiskaya Flotiliya v Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voine, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1962, pp.11-13. The composition of the Danube Flotilla.

136. The five flotillas in the text are those that were operative at the beginning of the war. See Boevoi Put Sovetskogo Voenno-Morskogo Flota, pp.572-578. For a descriptive account of eight of the flotillas which took part in the Great Patriotic War, see N.P. Vyunenkov, R.N. Mordvinov, Voennye Flotilii v Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voine, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1957.

The share of the heavy bomber force has risen from 10.6% to 20.6%, or doubled; that of the light bomber, attack and reconnaissance aircraft force has dropped from 50.2% to 26%, that is down to one half of what it was; and that of the fighter force has risen from 12.3% to 30%, that is increased by a factor of 2.5.¹³⁷

The policy of discarding light bombers and ground-support aircraft was another indicator of the difficulty to assess the real needs of modern warfare. On the basis of this policy the Soviet government declined a German offer (which was made in October, 1939) to sell to the Soviet Union the dive-bomber JU-87. At the time when speed was so highly valued by military thinkers and designers the JU-87s were considered by the Russians 'slow, outmoded couches'.¹³⁸ It took Soviet industry two years (1938-1940) to reorganize and to bring to fruition their new ideas in design, constructions and serial production. The task was almost insurmountable. At the end of the Spanish Civil War Soviet planes were all outclassed by the new German models. Messerschmitt-110 with a range of 1400 km. and a bomb-load of 500-1700 kg., had a speed of 545 km/h, whereas the I-16 Soviet fighter had a speed of only 462 km/h which was even slower than the German bomber JU-88 (465 km/h).¹³⁹ Many of the difficulties which had been revealed in 1938 did not find satisfactory solutions even in

137. A. Yakovlev, The Aim of A Life Time, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1972, p.73.

138. Ibid., pp.81-82.

139. IVOV, 1960, Vol.I, p.453; see also, Collective authorship, Sovetskie voenno-vozdushnie sily v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine 1941-1945 gg, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1961, p.9. The tactics and armament of I-16; also Colonel-General A. Yakovlev, 'Samolëty tridtsatykh godov', Aviatsiya i kosmonavtika, No.9, 1966, pp.75-79.

1940-41.¹⁴⁰ However, among the new models which flew as proto-types in 1940 there was also the IL-2 which incorporated many of the qualities of the rejected JU-87.¹⁴¹

In September, 1939, the Politburo decided 'to reconstruct existing and build new aircraft factories'. Following this decision nine new factories were built and nine old ones were reconstructed. In the following year seven more factories were converted to aircraft industry.¹⁴² This great effort was somewhat obstructed by sub-contractors who were late in producing several accessories. Although the problem did not seem to delay the assembly of proto-types it caused many troubles during the serial production stage. The Yak-1 for instance, was designed, assembled and had undergone flight tests within about seven months (May-December, 1940) but it reached combat

140. V.B. Shavrov, Istoriya konstruktssii Samoletov v SSSR do 1939 goda, Moscow, Mashinostroenie, 1969, p.589. For difficulties in later years see Lt.-General V. Pyshnov, 'Samolëty Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny' Aviatsiya i kosmonavtika, No.10, 1966; see also, Heinz J. Nowarra and G.R. Duval (compiled and written), Russian Civil and Military Aircraft 1884-1969, London, Fountain Press, 1971, p.116. Wood in aircraft construction.
141. Colonel-General S. Il'yushin, 'Ily na Sluzhbe Rodiny', Aviatsiya i kosmonavtika, No.5, 1968, pp.6-11, (see p.8 for difficulties in developing the airplane).
142. A. Yakovlev, op.cit., p.83; see also A.G. Fedorov, Aviatsiya v bitve pod Moskvoy, Moscow, Nauka, 1971, p.12; also C.G. Grey, Leonard Bridgman (compiled and edited) Jane's all the world aircraft, London, Sampson Low, Marston & Co. Ltd., 1940, p.145C. Russian Military Aircraft Factories; see also, Ibid., 1941, p.125C. Soviet institutions dealing with research development and production of aircraft and engines; see also, Colonel I. Sushik, 'Istochnik Nepobedimosti', Aviatsiya i kosmonavtika, No.7, 1963, p.4. The same decree of September 1939 which ordered the expansion of aircraft industry instructed also the shift of more engine factories to the east.

units in significant quantities only late in 1941. There were difficulties in production policy as well. The PE-2 was originally constructed as a high level bomber with pressurized cabin despite the fact that the Soviet Union did not have at the time the necessary facilities for pinpoint bombing. The policy had changed in 1939 and with it the roles assigned to the PE-2. In its ultimate version it was to be a dive-bomber, capable of strafing ground-support/attack missions as well, but this new designation entailed the discarding of the pressurized cabin, an additional air-brake to recover diving speeds and new armament. All this was done at extremely high speed but in the first half of 1941 only 462 PE-2's rolled off the assembly lines.¹⁴³ There have been various estimates of the production of aircraft in the Soviet Union before the war. It was estimated at 400 per month in 1938, another source mentioned 5000 per annum in 1936 and 20,000 per annum in 1939.¹⁴⁴ A recent Soviet source claimed that in the period from 1st January, 1939, to 22nd June, 1941 the VVS (Air Force) received 17,745 planes of which 3,719 were new models.¹⁴⁵ About a thousand of the latter ones were built in 1939-1940 and over

143. P. Stefanovskii, 'V Pyatom Okeane, Pervie Stratosfernyi'. Aviatsiya i kosmonavtika, No.3, 1967, pp.74-78. The history of PE-2; see also, Profile, No.216, p.115; also, Nowarra, Duval, op.cit., pp.114-115.

144. D. Fedotoff-White, op.cit., p.355; see also, Jane's all the world Aircraft, 1940, p.144c. Chief centres of aircraft production located round Moscow. Principal plant No.22 at Fili employed 25,000 workers and was capable of producing 300-350 twin engine bombers per annum. Plant No.21 at Gorky was said to have been able to run out five single seat fighters a day.

145. A.G. Fedorov, op.cit., p.12 the source mentioned is Arkhiv Ministerstva Oborony SSSR, p.35, OP.107559,D.13,LL158,162.

2,600 in the first half of 1941. The new Soviet machines were Yak-1 which achieved a speed of 577 kmh. at a height of 5000 m. which it could reach in 5 minutes 7 seconds, (the beginning of 1940) Lagg-3, 549 kmh., (1941) MIG-3, 620 kmh. (1941) IL-2, the armoured plane and PE-2.¹⁴⁶

The experience of the Spanish Civil War and Germany's progress in armaments modernization stimulated similar measures in the Soviet Union. No sooner was the aviation industry put on stable lines than structural modifications were changing the air force. The first change was in the size of the units. The basic reorganization of 1938 divided the air regiments into eskadrili and subordinated them in turn to air brigades. In 1940 the air regiments became sub-units of air divisions.¹⁴⁷ There was no separate air force command. Air force units were either part of Armies in which case they were under their command, or of Military Districts in which case they were under VVS command of the district. About 55-60 per cent of the air force was under the command of Armies and about 40-45 per cent under the

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146. S. Tsepelyuk, 'Razvitie Taktiki Shturmovoii Aviatsii v Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voine', VIZ, No.1, 1970, p.23; see also, N.E. Nosovskii, 'Nadezhnyi Arsenal Vooruzheniya', Voprosy istorii, No.11, 1970, for aircraft armament; also, A. Minaev, 'Pervie 25 Let', Aviatsiya i kosmonavtika, No.12, 1964, p.18, the development of MIG; also, Lt.-General V. Pyshnov, op.cit., Aviatsiya i kosmonavtika, pp.16-20, for development of aircraft, engines and armament; also, Colonel G. Zhirnykh, 'Razvitie Vooruzheniya Samoletov', Aviatsiya i kosmonavtika, No.8, 1967, pp.21-22. Comparative tables of Russian, German, U.S.A., U.K. machine-guns and guns in 1940-41 and 1941-45.
147. Chief Marshal K. Vershinin, 'Voenno-Vozdushnie Sily' VIZ, No.9, 1967, p.32, see also Fedorov, op.cit., p.15, for the organization of tactical units.

command of districts.¹⁴⁸ Long-range bomber command (ADD) was a separate force. As a result there was no significant air force reserve left for the High Command to reinforce a sector in time of need or to initiate large scale operations.

The air force had a considerable pool of man power to draw on. Already at the beginning of 1937, 98.9 per cent of the command staff of the air force had secondary or higher military education.¹⁴⁹ In 1939 there were 32 special flying and technical aviation schools. Voroshilov spoke of 'more than twenty thousand Communists and Komsomols who were trained in the aviation schools'.¹⁵⁰ According to an article in Voennaya Mysl in 1939 '... all flyers were passed through sanatoria, regardless of their state of health'; another indication of the high priority given to the air force.¹⁵¹ Yet at the beginning of 1941 the Soviet air force was still largely equipped with the same planes which had been outclassed by Germany in the last stage of the Spanish Civil War. The large scale air battles over Khalkhin Gol revealed tactical weakness to which no remedy had yet been applied

148. Chief Marshal Verzhin, op.cit., VIZ, No.9, 1967, p.32, see also Anfilov, op.cit., p.153, for demands of commanders to change this state of affairs; also Zhukov, op.cit., p.218; see also S.A. Krasovskii, Zhizn v Aviatsii, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, p. 112. Krasovskii and other commanders obviously believed that they had been on the verge of becoming an independent command, but the figures in the text do not bear out that notion.

149. Anfilov, op.cit., p.124.

150. Fedotoff-White, op.cit., p.373. Note, many of these 'schools' were actually courses of three months to a year.

151. Ibid., p.422; see also, Sovetskie Voenno-Vozdushnie Sil, pp. 15-17, for the annual crop of Air Force personnel in 1940 and the allocation of Air Force Staff.

at the beginning of 1941.¹⁵² In line with the air force shortcomings which had been voiced during the December Meeting a decree of the Central Committee and the Government was promulgated 'On reorganisation of the Soviet Air Force'. It stipulated organisation of 106 new regiments, that is about 20-25 new air divisions. The decree also planned raising the standard of the pilots and preparing them to master the new machines. Further reorganisation was ordered in a decree of 10 April, 1941. Services and rear installations were withdrawn from the combat units to form regional air bases and battalion air field facilities. The regional air bases were to become the rear service of Army's air force and front.¹⁵³ Towards the end of May only nineteen out of the 106 planned regiments were formed but not yet fully equipped.¹⁵⁴ New machines arrived in the air fields in great haste without armament and without radio sets, many of them even without canopies and radio masts.¹⁵⁵

Long before any of these improvements could take effect, the new MIG-3 was still facing construction and producing difficulties, though the Soviet government tried to cash in on its anticipated performance. In April a German delegation was invited to visit a

152. Voprosy Taktiki, p.334; see, Colonel V. Yemelyanenko, 'Takticheskaya Vnezapnost', Aviatsiya i kosmonavtika, No.7, 1966, pp.31-36 for the tactical lessons learned in Spain, Khalkhin Gol and Finland.

153. Zhukov, pp.217-219; see also, Chief Marshal K. Vershinin, op.cit., VIZ, No.9, 1967, p.34.

154. Zhukov, op.cit., p.218.

155. IVOV, 1960, Vol.I, p.454; see also Nowarra and Duval, op.cit., p.117. According to this sources the YAK-1(IP) might have been the first Soviet aircraft of its type to embody a radio installation.

Soviet aviation factory and air force installations near Moscow. Its head Oberst Heinrich Ashenbrenner German air attaché in Moscow, who headed the delegation was duly impressed. The MIG-3 with all its deficiencies, which remained unknown to the German delegation, was nevertheless a major improvement on anything that the Germans had known so far in the arsenal of the Soviet air force.¹⁵⁶ Rumours about a powerful new aircraft leaked out to the European press and the strength of the air force was mentioned by Soviet diplomats.¹⁵⁷ While the MIG-3 and the air force were featuring so prominently in the diplomatic war of nerves, on the shop-floor and in the air the new machines were coming across a complicated process of production and introduction into service. The MIG-3 was the first plane of the new vintage to arrive in combat units in quantity. After several accidents in test flights it was rumoured to be a difficult plane to handle.¹⁵⁸ Pyotr M. Stefanovskii, one of the leading test pilots in the Soviet Union was sent to a fighter division under the command of General Osipenko. It was the first division to be fully equipped with MIG-3s, but the pilots stuck to their old I-153 and I-16 and would not convert to the new machines until Stefanovskii demonstrated the capabilities of the MIG.¹⁵⁹

156. Air Enthusiast, Vol.I, No.5, October, 1971, p.252; see also, Colonel N. Kon'kov, 'Zapiski Aviakonstruktora' (review of Yakovlev's book Tsel Zhizn) Aviatsiya i kosmonavtika, No.2, 1967, p.84. In 1940 Soviet constructors and aircraft designers were instructed to study German aircraft.

157. See above p.148.

158. Lt. General V. Pyshon, op.cit., Aviatsiya i kosmonavtika, No.10, pp.16-20. The combat qualities of MIG-3; see also, Colonel-General A. Yakovlev, 'Konstruktor Samolët Vremya', Aviatsiya i kosmonavtika, No.7, 1968, pp.12-16; see also, Nowarra, Duval, op.cit., p.118.

159. Stefanovskii, Trista Neizvestnykh, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, p.161.

The expansion of the air force and the new borders of the Soviet Union created a shortage of airfields, a problem which grew in seriousness as troops were moving closer to the borders with almost no air defence at all.¹⁶⁰ The NKVD was partially in charge of man power for large scale construction. When the tension along the borders mounted a huge complex of airfields was being constructed or reconstructed simultaneously along the western border. Many of the airfields were rendered useless for the duration of the work and civil aviation including German was diverted by instruction of the Commissar for civil aviation to military airfields some distance from the border.¹⁶¹ The problem of airfields cropped up in another context at the end of May when top officials of the Aircraft Industry Commissariat and high ranking commanders of the air force convened in the Kremlin.¹⁶² They were invited to discuss the problems of camouflage in the airfields. Not only were the planes packed in neat rows along a brightly lit airfield but also no attempt was made to camouflage buildings, control towers, runways, white tents in the air force camps, indeed the planes themselves. During the conference it was discovered that SB bombers were painted silver and fighters in solid green from the waist upwards and blue from the waist downward.

160. Fedorov, *op.cit.*, p.15; see also, *IVOV*, 1963, Vol.I, p.476. The NKVD which was in charge of construction works sent crowds of workers to many border airfields at the same time so that by 22nd June 1941, many of these were out of use; see also Zhukov, *op.cit.*, p.219; also, Anfilov, *op.cit.*, p.168; also L.M. Sandalov, 'Na Brestsko-Bobruiskom Napravlenii v Pervie Dni Otechestvennoi voyny', extract of *Perezhitoe*, p.181. The new machines - YAK-1, IL-2, PE-2 - started to arrive at 15th June, into the airfields which were supposed to be ready in a month and for the time being were half covered with concrete.

161. Meretskoy, *op.cit.*, p.204.

162. A. Yakovlev, *op.cit.*, pp.128-130.

Both bombers and fighters had glistening gloss paint all over. Unfortunately there was no solution at hand; it took several days before the right paint was tested and a well camouflaged model produced and approved. The results of the conference were translated into action only in the middle of June when Meretskov inspected the districts and personally saw to it that planes were dispersed in operation airfields and camouflaged. Orders to camouflage reached Military District commanders only on 19 June.¹⁶³

However the major concern of the air force was pilots' lack of experience. The main problem was co-ordination within units, between units as well as between air and ground.¹⁶⁴ Up to 1st May, 1941, pilots had the opportunity to train for only 15.5 hours in the Baltic MD, nine hours in the Western MD and four hours in Kiev MD.¹⁶⁵ In Moscow MD 'only 15 per cent of the fighter pilots could fly at night, the rest were trained for combat activity in day light only'.¹⁶⁶ On the other hand 13th Bomber Division in Bobruisk airfield had so many hours of night training that the pilots complained. One of them said:

163. Anfilov, *op.cit.*, p.182, Timoshenko 'special order' of 19th June to camouflage the airfields; see also Yakovlev, *op.cit.*, pp. 128-129; also, Cajus Bekker, *The Luftwaffe War Diaries*, London, Corgi Books, 1972, p.278; also, R. Jackson, *The Red Falcons*, London, Tandem, 1970, p.79.

164. *Sovetskie Voenno-Vozdushnie Sily*, pp.20-21. The new Field Service Regulations [PU-36] which was authorized in June 1941 dealt with air-ground co-ordination, as well as with co-ordination between the Air-Force and the Navy.

165. *IVOV*, 1963, Vol.I, p.476.

166. A.G. Fedorov, 'Na Vozdushnykh Podstupakh k Moskve', *Voprosy istorii*, p.116. Fedorov claims that 18% of the pilots were trained for night activities.

My wife is asking for a divorce. For weeks I have not even dropped in at home.¹⁶⁷

In several units Radio transmitters and receivers were installed only in flight commanders' planes and communication was effected by verey-lights and wing signs.¹⁶⁸ Against such odds it was hard to expect a high degree of expertise in handling the new machines, let alone precision in co-ordination. Intensive training made conversion from old models to new ones even more painful than usual not only because it was a complicated process demanding patience and time but also because every pilot had in fact two machines, his old one which had been kept for the duration of the conversion and the new one. Consequently command and control as well as maintenance were further complicated. Yet training was the only solution.

In December 1940 Rychagov had outlined the planned development of the Air Force in 1941. The new, promising prototypes had already been tested, a trickle of new machines had found its way to combat units forming the basis for a modern force. The reorganization of combat units, logistics and rear services was also moving slowly ahead leading some commanders to believe that the Air Force was on the verge of becoming an independant branch like the Navy. Evidently there were other forces which cut right across this process. Rychagov did not stay around long enough to see the fruits of his efforts. Just before the war he became another victim of the

167. F.P. Polinyn, Boevie Marshruty, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1972, p.80.

168. For a different account see Major-General S. Luganskii, 'Na Glubokikh Virazhakh', Aviatsiya i kosmonavtika, No.10, 1963.

7 add note re Ptukhin

'cult of the personality',¹⁶⁹ a phrase that had so often suggested that an individual had been shot. Rychagov was replaced by P.F. Zhigarev. However, not only at the top were there troubles, further down the line in the Leningrad MD there was a complete reshuffle of Air Force Command. In August 1940 Lieutenant-General E.S. Ptukhin, until then C-in-C Air Force Leningrad MD had become C-in-C Air Force Kiev MD and was replaced by his Chief of Staff A.A. Novikov. At 20th June 1941 Novikov was ordered by Timoshenko to report in Moscow. He rushed back from an inspection tour that the MD commanders had been conducting around Murmansk and Kandalaksha. As soon as he arrived back in Leningrad he phoned Timoshenko and was told by General Zlobin that he had been assigned to the post of C-in-C Air Force of Kiev MD, whereupon he handed his command over to General A.P. Nekrasov. However when he asked about Ptukhin Zlobin reply was very curt to the effect that Ptukhin's new assignment had not yet been decided.¹⁷⁰ It was very likely that by that time Ptukhin's fate had already been sealed. He became yet another victim of 'Kult Lichnosti'.¹⁷¹ Since no official confirmation for Nekrasov's assignment came through from Moscow and the tension along the Western borders grew by the hour Novikov was ordered by General D.N. Nikishev COS Leningrad to resume his old command. Popov, C-in-C Leningrad, was about to return from Murmansk on the following day, and Zhdanov, the strong man of the Military Council, was expected to come back from Sochi. Nikishev

169. Major-General S. Andreev, 'Pavel Rychagov', Aviatsiya i kosmonavtika, No.3, 1963, pp.76-77.

170. A.A. Novikov, V Nebe Leningrada, Moscow, Nauka, 1970, p.39.

171. Lev Vasilevskii, 'Stranitsyi Geroicheskoi Biografii', Aviatsiya i kosmonavtika, No.9, 1963, p.84. *no date mentioned*.

was in command and Novikov had no option but to obey.¹⁷² This was only one example of the growing chaos in the Air Force Command.

Under the reorganization following Timoshenko's appointment to the post of Commissar for Defence in 1940, the Air Defence PVO had become a Main Administration (Glavnie upravlenie) in the Commissariat for Defence. Chief of PVO had been appointed Lieutenant-General D.T. Kozlov,¹⁷³ who was replaced in turn by Colonel-General G.M. Shtern. The latter assumed his command on 19 March 1941, in the wake of the reshuffling of the Soviet High Command after the December meeting. However on 14 June 1941 Shtern was suddenly removed from his post and was replaced by Colonel-General N.N. Voronov, a General already heavily burdened with his duties as Deputy Commander Artillery.¹⁷⁴ Colonel-General Shtern's biography also ended in 1941, making him a third victim within a very short time. The removal of a group of high ranking officers suggested a potent though small-scale purge. Indeed it was a blow aimed at the Air Force and its close affiliate the PVO. However, the first three victims formed a group in more ways than one.¹⁷⁵ Not only were they all Air Force or Air Defence

172. A.A. Novikov, op.cit., p.44.

173. See also Anfilov, op.cit., p.121. Note also the close links between the Air Force and the Air Defence; Collective authorship, Voiska Protivo Vozdushnoi Oborony Strany, see also, Anfilov, op.cit., p.121, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968.

174. Ibid.

175. On 22nd June, 1941 C-in-C Air Force of the Western Front I.I. Kopets committed suicide. He was also a veteran of the Spanish Civil War. On 25th June, 1941 T.F. Kutsevalov replaced A.P. Ionov as C-in-C Air Force of NWF. In July, 1941 F.A. Astakhov replaced Michugin as C-in-C Air Force SF. The last three were replaced after the failure of the Soviet Air Force during the first days of the war.

commanders but they had all been Soviet advisers during the Civil War in Spain. In the face of such perils the Air Force and its commanders could only find it difficult if not impossible to discharge their duties.

Fixed Defences

After 1938 the fortifications along the borders of the Soviet Union consisted primarily of several Fortified Areas (Ukrepleniia - UR - FA).¹⁷⁶ In Leningrad MD - Karelia, Kingisepp and Pskov FA, in Belo-Russia MD - Polotsk, Minsk and Mozirsk FA; in Kiev MD - Korosten, Novgorod-Volinsky, Letichesk, Mogilev - Yampolsk, Kiev, Rebnitsk and Tiraspol FA. In all these 13 Fortified Areas there were 3196 strong points. They were manned by 25 machinegun battalions, altogether 18,000 men. During 1938-1939 work started on the construction of a further 8 Fortified Areas along the 'old borders': Ostrovsk, Sebezhsk, Slutsk, Shepetovka, Isiaslavl, Staro-Konstantinovsk, Ostropol and Kamenets-Podolsk FA, Pskov FA and Ostrovsk FA were united. But while these FA were under construction the Soviet Union annexed several more areas and pushed the border westward as a result of which work along the old border was frozen and the defensive works, uncompleted, were not manned. Following a decision taken in 1940 nine additional FA were constructed and by the first half of 1941 they reached various degrees of completion: Murmansk, Sortaval Keksholm, Viborg, Khanko,

176. A form of defence which had already been used during the Civil War in Russia. See, A.M. Karbyshev, Izbranie Nauchnie Trudy, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1962, pp.281-285. On the Eastern Front there were about 25 Fortified Areas some of them stretching to a depth of 100-150 Vërst.

Telshai, Kovel, Verkhne-Prut, and Nizhne-Prut. After the occupation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina preparations were made for the construction of Dunai, Odessa and Chernovich FA.¹⁷⁷ This was the general outline of fortification to which modifications should have been made according to the situation along the borders.

On 12th October, 1940, Major General A.F. Khrenov, Chief of Main Military Engineering Direction presented the Chief of General Staff (Meretskov) with a report on Fortified Areas (UR). According to his report the Fortified Areas had two main drawbacks: no study was made of the enemy forces which the Fortified Area might have to engage; who, how and with what it would be necessary to fight in the Fortified Areas. The whole idea of fortification and fortified areas came under scrutiny during the December Meeting and the January War Games. In essence they were not fully compatible with Soviet ideas about the offensive spirit and about carrying the battle on to enemy territory.¹⁷⁸

Attempts to solve this seeming theoretical contradiction were made by enlarging the depth of the Fortified Areas which provided for strong armoured reserves at the depth of an attacked sector of the front. These forces were to be held back until the opportune time

177. Marshal M.V. Zakharov, 'Stranitsy Istorii Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil Nakanune Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voiny 1939-1941', Voprosy istorii, No.5, 1970, p.31. See also, Oberkommando Des Heeres, Denkschrift uber die Russische Landesbefestigung, Berlin, Gedruckt in Der Reichsdruckerei, 1942, pp.29, p.59, plan of defence works in Minsk; p.64 plan of defence works in Novgorod Volinsky.

178. However it is interesting to note that in the inter war period thought was given not only to the material side of defence works but also to the psychology of the soldiers who manned them. See Karbyshev, op.cit., pp.288-289. For Khrenov's report see Anfilov, op.cit., pp.152-163.

when they would be forcibly committed to a counter-blow, destroying enemy wedges. However their immediate purpose was to protect areas of strategic importance, be they economic or military. Further theoretical development was contributed by Sokolovsky, who attempted to 'break' the rigidity of concrete and iron defence lines, by elastic tactical manoeuvres. Against the ^{idea of} 'sacred soil' which the army was not allowed to relinquish, he suggested that the ultimate aim of war was to bleed the enemy white to destroy his morale, in short to win. Inherent in this dispute was the old clash between a classical, positional war of stages, namely - mobilisation, concentration, border skirmishes, major encounters, and a war of movement which engulfed the whole depth of the battle-field from the very beginning.

When after the December Meeting and the January War Games¹⁷⁹ the Soviet Government realised that the Red Army would not be prepared for modern warfare to the extent some people believed it had been, they had to fall back on the fortified areas. The whole idea of fortified defence lines and areas was to make it difficult for an armoured enemy to advance on essential centres, or to occupy significant strategic positions. During the January War Games, Zhukov had demonstrated how weak the fortifications were in the Western Military District and how a bold and unexpected blow might overwhelm them. At the time his criticism of the FA both regarding their location and their state was overruled by authority, but when he became a GCS he tried to rectify the situation. His orders and the directives of NKO and the Supreme Military Council followed, at least

179. Anfilov, op.cit., p.130. In January 1941 the sappers conducted a War Game directed by Colonel Proshlyakov.

partially, Khrenov's comments. Notice was taken of the German concentration and an attempt was made to fortify the areas accordingly. On 20 February, 1941, there was a directive (NKO and Supreme Military Council) to the effect that the depth of the Fortified Areas should reach 30-50 km.; they should defend important operative directions or regions; they should provide defence for troops in defence or on the offensive; there should be anti-tank and anti-personnel obstacles.¹⁸⁰ Regarding the last item the directive specified that the obstacles (mines) on the main directions of a possible enemy advance should be in position even in peace time whereas in secondary sectors they were to be laid during the period of mobilisation. During February and March, 1941, the Supreme Military Council met twice to discuss the problem of the new Fortified Areas (along the new borders). Kulik, Shaposhnikov and Zhdanov recommended that the artillery be moved from the old to the new Fortified Areas. Zhukov and Timoshenko's objections were overruled.¹⁸¹ On 18 March the Commissar of Defence directed Kiev Military District to hasten the pace of fortification. The growing German concentration along the Soviet borders ^{persuaded} convinced the government to modify its stand regarding the old Fortified Areas and some sectors were allowed to maintain their former artillery strength. Altogether the budget for fortifications in 1941 was 1.5 times more than in 1940 and it was divided between the Baltic MD (50%) the Western MD (25%), Kiev MD (9%) and others (16%). In April it was noted that students of Engineering schools

180. Anfilov, op.cit., p.163.

181. Timoshenko and Zhukov's recommendations were based on a tour of inspection they have conducted in the Fortified Areas in February 1941, see Zhukov, op.cit., p.214.

were suddenly recruited.¹⁸² The whole country was divided into 138 construction zones under the supervision of UNS (Upravleniia nachalnika stroitelstva), Headquarters of the Chief of Constructors. 38 construction battalions were formed; 25 independent construction companies; 17 transport battalions; 160 engineers and sapper battalions in the border districts; and 41 battalions of engineers and sappers in other districts. During 1941 there were 17,820 volunteers for fortifications. 57,778 workers were occupied daily in the Baltic Military District; 34,930 in Western Military District and 43,006 in Kiev Military District. (This breakdown does not follow the budget allocations, but there might have been other factors.) Much use was made of artillery lorries and tractors to the detriment of their training programme. By May a fortified area was completed on the right flank of Kiev Military District, but it was neither armed nor manned.¹⁸³

On 8 April the General Staff issued directives (No. YH/584815) to the Western and Kiev Military District ordering the maintenance of Slutsk, Sebezh, Sepetovka, Izyaslavl, Starokonstantinovska and Ostropol as Fortified Areas in their present state. It gave further instructions regarding training of commanding personnel, artillery, type of fortification and the use to be made of the old reinforced-concrete constructions built in 1938-1939 in Letichev,

182. Foreign Relations of the U.S.A., 1941 Vol.I, p.136. The report specifies that these students were sent to the border to erect defence works there.

183. Fedyuninskii, op.cit., p.6; see also Nekrich, op.cit., pp.83-84; also, Grigorovich, op.cit., p.12. There was a gap of 25 km. in the fortifications in Sokal region between the left flank of the 5th Army and the right flank of the 6th Army; see also, Denkschrift Über Die Russische Landesbefestigung, p.133. The defence area of the 5th Army; also, Moskalenko, op.cit., Vol.I, pp.21,28.

Mogilev, Yampol, Novgorod-Volynsky, Minsk, Polotsk and Mozyr Fortified Areas.¹⁸⁴ On 14th April Zhukov was forced to issue a new order to the same effect because very little was done after his former ones. Too little was done concerning the second Khrenov comment in his report of 12 October, 1940.¹⁸⁵

The Fortified Areas could be manned by Field Troops, that is forces other than the garrisons, only by direct command of the Military District commander, which in turn could be issued only with specific permission of the Commissar of Defence. Otherwise the border was defended by the Frontier Troops which in peace time took orders from the NKVD (the Ministry of the Interior headed then by L. Beria). In emergencies the Frontier Troops of each sector were subordinated to the nearest military Headquarters. Under such circumstances the Frontier Troops, together with the Covering Army, [about a third of each first line Army] were supposed to withhold the first enemy onslaught. It was not entirely clear what was an emergency and how to ensure that every soldier and each unit was properly alerted, received its orders and knew what to do. As was the case with full mobilisation, general alert and a test of all lines of communications, a general emergency case along the borders had not been exercised. There was more than a hint of possible trouble in the liaison between the army and the Frontier Troops at all times and during the occupation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina in particular.

By 1 June along the West MD there were 193 elements of armed

184. Zhukov, op.cit., p.229.

185. Ibid., p.230.

permanent fortifications (Vooruzhennikh dolgovremennikh sooruzhenii) 909 field type installations (Sooruzhenia polevogo tipa) and 193 entrenched tanks (MS-1) with 45 mm. guns. Along 470 km., which was the length of the West MD front, there were an average of three fire-points to one kilometer. Yet, even these defensive works were in poor shape, trenches half covered with sand and gun-ports cluttered with soil. On 11 June Timoshenko ordered the cleaning and repair of the fortifications by 15 July 1941. By the middle of June 1941 there were still gaps of 10-80 km. in the fortified defence lines a factor which to a large extent forfeited their original purpose.¹⁸⁶

Signals

Communication was in poor shape indeed. The heritage of the Imperial Army was pitiable. There were several telephone switchboards of different makes and no radio installations worth mentioning. To rectify this situation, several measures were taken by the Red Army in 1921 and later. A High Military School of Signalling for command staff of the Red Army (Vyshaya voennaya shkola svyazi komandnogo sostava RKKA) and a High Electro-technical School within the Military Electro-technical Academy of the Red Army and Navy, were established in 1921. Medium rank commanders were sent to short courses in Leningrad and Kiev signalling schools.¹⁸⁷ However, radio and electronic industries had not sufficiently developed in the Soviet Union, and

186. Anfilov, op.cit., pp.162-166.

187. Lt. General Kurochkin, 'V Obshchem Stroya Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil', VIZ, No.10, 1969, p.102; see also, Collective authorship, Voennye Svyazisti v Dni Voyny i Mira, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, p.96.

consequently the use of radio in military units was not widespread. It was almost non-existent when the Red Army invaded Finland. In the later half of 1940 and the beginning of 1941, when German reconnaissance planes became a serious problem, the army had to make use of the Frontier Troops communication lines for aircraft warning system VNOS (vozdushnoe nabludenie opoveshchnie i sviaz). Not only at home was there a shortage of radio transmitter-receivers, but Soviet agents in Europe who sensed the approaching crises were crying out in vain for radio sets.¹⁸⁸ The army, then, had to rely on telephone or telegraph communication. In air formations, commanders of units were equipped with radio sets, and the rest of the formation had to follow the commander, keeping a visual link with him. After 1936 the aircraft of several long range bomber commander had been fitted with the new RSI-4 sets. These new sets could transmit and receive on all wave-bands and not less important, the UKV radio station could transmit and receive while in motion. But only a few of the new sets had been produced before the war.¹⁸⁹ On a national level the system of signalling was inadequate for smooth, elastic traffic:

The system of line signalling at that time was radial. According to this system Moscow and most of the republics and regional centres had radial line signals shooting out of their lines. All the country's net works of lines

188. Gilles Perrault, The Red Orchestra, London, C. Nicholls and Company Limited, 1970, p.41.

189. Voennie Svyazisti v Dri Voiny i Mira, p.96; see also IVOV, 1960, Vol.I, p.455.

consisted of a series of supposedly autonomous, and as a rule, not inter-connected system of signals.¹⁹⁰

For instance in Karelya the telephone and telegraph system was not satisfactory. On the face of it there were many lines but their plan and the scarcity of parallel lines made it difficult to use them in the necessary places. Telegraph poles were too thin and could not carry the weight of extra lines and the whole system had been long overdue for general repair. Evidently there were troubles also in underground cables connecting Leningrad and Moscow. The main line was put into the frozen ground in the winter and the cold workers eager to finish as quickly as possible did not take great care in isolating the lines, and consequently there were occasionally crossed lines. Institutionally the same lines were in use and under the authority of the Commissariat of Signals (NKS - Narkomat svyazi), the Commissariat of Communications (NKPS), the Frontier Troops and the Air Defence (PVO), each with its specific technical demands and switchboards. There was not one underground cable in all the Western theatre of military activities (TVD - Teatr voennykh deistvii) while stationary radio stations were not available to the army everywhere and therefore had not been much in use.¹⁹¹ Due to the shortage in radio transmitter-receivers, the technical deficiencies of the existing ones and lack of experience, commanders on the whole preferred the much easier and simpler telephone conversations, because there was no need for code and complex decoding tables. However as a

190. I. Peresyarkin, 'Svyaz General'nogo Shtaba', VIZ, No.4, 1971, p.21.

191. P.M. Kurochkin, Pozhyvnie Fronta, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1969, pp.112-113.

result of the telephone system the volume of information through these lines was limited, extending the time it took for an order to go all the way from the centre to the individual soldier and restricting the urgent information from the field to the centre. The same applied in regard to the telegraph, which had been much in use by the Red Army. The few short-wave 5AK radio sets which were installed in commander tanks failed to function properly while the vehicles were in motion, or else their range was considerably shortened.

Radio was first introduced into combat by the southern group during the 'incident' at Khalkhin Gol. Headquarters operations of the 57th Rifle Division, 5th and 11th Tank Divisions and 8th Armoured Brigade were co-ordinated by radio, but radio signals not for direct combat was widely used in August, 1939, in the Far East.¹⁹² Probable correlation between effective command and control and effective signals lines, if it was not completely lost, was certainly slow in taking effect. During the operations in West Ukraine and Belo-Russia in late 1940 failure in signals was one of the major halting factors. Telephone and telegraph systems there could not stand up to the demands of the Red Army.¹⁹³

The December meeting which had been a theoretical breakthrough in many respects dealt with some of the problems of signals too. At the beginning of 1941 signals units were in the process of reorganisation, together with the mechanised formations:

192. Voennie svyazisti, p.107.

193. Ibid., p.109; see also, IVOV, 1960, Vol.I, p.455.

Signals (independent regiments, battalions and companies) consisted of signal units of Military Districts and of Armies and also of separate battalions and small units which were in the process of reorganisation within the mechanised combined arms tank divisions and battalions.¹⁹⁴

A signalling unit of the front consisted of a signalling regiment; radio battalion; 5-6 line battalions of signalling of front type; 3 companies of telegraph constructors; 3 companies of telegraph operators; 3 companies of telephone constructors; radio battalion for special duties; military pigeon-cote; field post set-up; depot and service shop. A signalling unit of the Army consisted of a signalling regiment of the Army; line battalion of signalling Army type; 2 companies of telegraph constructors and operators; 4 companies of telephone constructors; depot and servicing shop; field post set-up; and military pigeon-cote. Yet for lack of range, Headquarters had to use radio-cars which revealed their location to the enemy.¹⁹⁵

On 8 March, 1941, the General Staff ordered the signalling troops to make use of the Commissariat of Signalling (NKS) radio stations for military purposes. 228 radio-stations were assigned for use in case of war, but due to local difficulties the signalling command did not comply.¹⁹⁶ Following the March order the General Staff, this time together with the NKS, decided to appoint commanders of the signalling corps to communication centres of the NKS.¹⁹⁷

194. IVOV, 1960, Vol.I, p.459.

195. Voennie Svyazisti, p.132.

196. Ibid., p.122.

197. Ibid., p.121.

42 Communication points were prepared along the Western border, according to the Plan of Operation, 98 per cent of which were in the West MD. However, in the spirit of the offensive war which would carry the Red Army on to enemy territory it was not considered necessary to build fortified signals points. Until after the beginning of the war the General Staff signals system was dependent on the signals net of NKS. The Commissariat lines were given to the General Staff on lease. Since in peace time the volume of information was not large there was no need to establish an alternative network.¹⁹⁸

Two major problems had not been solved by the beginning of June, 1941:

The problem of organisation of signals between arms and services was not properly worked out.¹⁹⁹

and actual mobilisation of the signals troops:

Most of the Army and Front signals units should have been formed after mobilisation had been announced.²⁰⁰

On 27 October, 1940, General N.I. Gapich, Chief of Signals, sent a report to Timoshenko to the effect that the signals stock was deteriorating for lack of replacement, complement and renovation. According to this report it would have taken two to five years if not more to complete the material currently in use and to build up a

198. Voennie svyazisti, p.122.

199. Ibid., p.120.

200. Bagramyan, op.cit., p.88.

reserve.²⁰¹ On the eve of the war Lieutenant-General P.S. Klenov, Chief of Staff Baltic MD, complained in a report to the General Staff that the poor signals strongly suggested crisis (mogushchim vizvate krizis) in command and control of troops.²⁰² Nowhere was the whole signals system put to the test. As tension along the borders mounted it was considered imprudent to assemble all the commanders of a district for command and control check-up for fear that they might all be trapped in one place leaving the whole district without command. Thus, the plan to conduct a signals war game in Odessa MD which was to take place on 18 June was called off at the last minute.²⁰³

Apart from the Signals Forces (svyazisti voiska) proper there were another two signals networks - the Frontier Troops one and the PVO - Air Defence. In 1939 the PVO received RADAR sets of the Model RUS-1 (RADIOLOKATSIYA) and later on the better type RUS-2.

201. Voennie svyazisti, p.124.

202. Ibid., p.120.

203. M.V. Zakharov, 'Stranitsy istorii sovetskikh vooruzhennykh sil nakanune Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny 1939-1941', Voprosy istorii, No.5, 1970, p.45.

CHAPTER V

SURPRISE ATTACK

The war, which had not yet been officially declared or even effectively opened, came in a variety of guises to many soldiers and people. For Lieutenant Mazurenko it had started already on Friday 20 June at 18.5 hours when he exchanged fire with a German reconnaissance bomber over Brest.¹ For the Frontier Troops in the Baltic MD near Taurage the war started on the night of 20-21st June with two fire exchanges at 2.40 hours and at 3.15 hours. Tension in the Gulf of Finland had started to intensify as early as the 16th of June when German ships hastily left Baltic harbours and sailed for home. It was not abated by the fact that the Germans kept laying mines in the water nor yet by the appearance of the battleship Bismarck and the ostentatiously exercising Hipper. Along the River Bug the Germans were busy building a tall hedge. The work lasted two days (19-21) and when it ended a distinct din of tanks and motor-vehicles came over the Bug from behind this hedge.²

Frontier Troops, and occasionally other units too, had already been accustomed to the ebb and flow of tension since the end of April. Such times were tedious, they meant less sleep, with the inevitable result that the soldiers became ill-tempered and the commanders edgy. By the end of June the commanders in Western MD had ceased to pay very

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1. Pogranichnie Voiska SSSR 1939-1941, p.401 (Document 396, 20th June, 1941).
 2. Dolotov Ivan Ivanovich, 'Pod Znamenem Lenina', Geroicheskaya Oborona, Sbornik vospominanii ob oborune Brestskoi kreposti v iyune-iyule 1941 g., Minsk, Gosizdat BSSR, 1961, p.326. Note, the attitude towards the battle of Brust has changed after Stalin's death when official acknowledgement of the Red Army's unpreparedness tore the 'Stalin version' to pieces.

much attention to such alarms.³

For many Soviet chroniclers Saturday 21st June in Brest and its vicinity impressed itself on their minds as a warm and sunny day. Units were scattered all over the region in fire ranges, in tactical courses and in training. In case of an emergency it could have taken a day or a day and a half merely to assemble the units of the 4th Army.⁴ On Saturday evening, still clear and warm, the soldiers in the fortress and along the Bug were enjoying a well deserved free evening after a long day. Many went to the cinema. 44th Rifle Regiment enjoyed a film show in the open air, the 98th Independent Anti-tank Artillery Division was preparing for a play and on Saturday night there was a rehearsal. Other soldiers went to bed in anticipation of the coming, lazy Sunday with its better food (Khoroshii budet klëv. Zavtra pokushem svezhei ryby). Sergeant I.P. Kotov's unit of Frontier Troops was preparing a surprise for him: the following day, 22nd June, 1941, was his birthday. Frontier Troops unit No.90 took the evening off complete with guitar and balalaikas.⁵ All the commanders in Sokal had a day off in Lvov and when the duty officer in charge of the Sokal bridge searched for explosives because he observed suspicious

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3. For false alarms see Zhukov, op.cit., p.213; also P.V. Sevastyanov, op.cit., p.9. Alarm on 14th June, 1941; also V.V. Platonov, op.cit., p.15. 87th Rifle Division was put on the alert for a fortnight at the end of April and then sent back to camp; also Anfilov, op.cit., p.178. False alarm in May.
 4. Major-General Popov - Commander of 28th Rifle Corps and Colonel Lukin - COS 28th Rifle Corps 'Boevie deistviya chastie korpusa s 22.6.41 g po 1.7.41 g', Geroicheskaya Oborona, p.598. See the whole report for the deployment and the activities of part of the 4th Army on 21st June, 1941.
 5. V.V. Platonov, Oni Pervymi Prinyali Udar, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1963, p.17. Note the pastoral atmosphere of the description.

movement round the bridge he could not find the officer in charge of explosives. He too had gone to Lvov, as it transpired.

However, towards evening strange things started happening. There were flares all along the Baltic border. Information about agents and saboteurs, combined with stories of deserters, created a feeling of uneasiness which amounted to a real concern in border HQs and brought apprehension to the chain of higher command. Yet it seemed that for the whole day throughout the evening and most of the night those commanders who were worried sent their reports along routine channels - along which they wound their way from one echelon of command to another. Meanwhile the soldiers were left alone in fully-lit barracks and camps; families of Commanding personnel were not evacuated. Some of the units which were alerted were sent to advanced positions with little, or no ammunition.⁶ There were two reasons for keeping ammunitions under lock and key. The fortress of Brest was a huge place with women and children living in officers' messes and with a constant flow of units coming and going. The unit on duty was given a ratio of ammunition - 600 rounds for the regiment. Rifles were duly stacked, as were machine-guns with their magazines fitted - but not a single round in them. This was the usual routine of an army in peace time. The second reason was political. Commanders of units which were eventually alerted and sent out to the perimeter of the fortress were ordered not to issue ammunition. Some of them did not obey the order.⁷

6. D.I. Ivanovich, op.cit., Geroicheskaya oborona, pp.328-329; see also, P.V. Sevastyanov, Neman-Volga-Dunai, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1961, p.10.

7. Ibid.; According to Sevastyanov the order not to issue ammunition was pursued locally by the political side of the Military Council, suggesting constant friction which grew under the pressure of events.

Only towards evening did information from the border start to activate the clumsy and creaking decision-making machinery in Moscow. The General Staff had been busy all day sifting information and sending out instructions within the boundaries allowed to it - namely, not to stir any trouble close to the border and not to give room for any provocation (whatever that might mean). It should be noted that the meaning of 'provocation' had not been clearly and openly defined. The Politburo, which was in session on the 21st June, issued a decree forming the units of Odessa MD into an Army with an operational command centre in Vinitsa but with real control left many miles away in Moscow.⁸ Effectively two overall commanders were appointed to Odessa MD - Budenny and Zhukov.⁹ The decision seemed to be both military and political in nature - probably with the hope of keeping Rumania out of a possible war.

While Saturday 21st June lingered on warm and peaceful on the Soviet side of the border German commando units were being briefed about their targets. German agents, volunteers or recruits from among the local population of the Soviet Union (Völkischer Aktivisitengruppen) were preparing their arm-bands by which they were to be recognised by the advancing German army.¹⁰ The recruitment and training of these

8. Anfilov, op.cit., p.182. The fact that the Politburo issued such a decree on Saturday 21st June suggests that it was either in session or stood by in anticipation for at least 24 hours before the German attack.

9. On 22nd June, 1941 after the beginning of the German attack I.V. Tyulenev was nominated C-in-C South Front, see I.V. Tyulenev, Cherez Tri Voyny, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1960, p.142.

10. Anlage Zu Abschnittsstab Ostpreussen, Ic/V.O. ABW. II Nr.574/41 G.K. Chfs. 13.6.41. In a document entitled Entwaffnung Völkischer Aktivistengruppen, the German units that were to meet the agents were instructed to disarm them.

agents, not unbeknownst to the Soviet Frontier Troops,¹¹ the selection of meeting points, the compilation of data about military installations and units were the fruit of long months of preparations by German Intelligence services. The targets were selected with pinpointing accuracy.¹² The aim of the operations was to confuse, to stun, to paralyse and to achieve control over the Soviet military 'nerve' system. To that end enough signals networks were to be destroyed in order to break the Soviet chain of command but by no means all of them so as to enable the conquering army to make use of them as soon as they could secure these networks in their hands.¹³

The Germans managed to obtain accurate and nearly complete information about the Red Army in near proximity to the Western borders of the Soviet Union. Furthermore they had good knowledge of post offices, telephone and telegraph cables and radio stations. Special

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11. V.V. Platonov, op.cit., p.16 about capture of OUN (Ukrainian Nationalist Organization) agents; see also Pogranichnie Voiska SSSR 1939-1941, p.392 [Document 378, 13th June, 1941], p.393 [Document 379, 14th June, 1941] pp.397-398 [Document 389, Not before 16th June, 1941]; see also L.M. Sandalov, Na Brestsko-bobruiskom napravlenii v pervie dni Otechestvennoi voyny. Off print of a book - Perezhitoe, p.181. The same version appears in L.M. Sandalov, Perezhitoe, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1966, pp.89-90. Sandalov writes that there were spies and agents despite the evacuation of the border population; see also L.M. Sandalov, Na Moskovskom Napravlenii, Moscow, Nauka, 1970, p.73. After 19.00, 21st June two houses were set to fire on two sides of the River Bug. At the time the Russians did not guess what it was but looking back at it Sandalov concluded that these fires were signals for agents.
12. Anlage Zu Abschnittsstab Ostpreussen, Ic/V.O. ABW.II Nr.574/41 G.K. Chefs, 3.6.41. Die Einsatzpunkte des Regiments 800.
13. Ibid.

care was taken by the Germans to knock out these places and if possible and where necessary to secure them in their hands. Many of these operations demanded fine precision in timing and co-ordinating three separate organizations - local agents, Army commando and Regiment 800 of the Brandenburg Division.¹⁴ Local agents had been lying low inside the Soviet Union for some time before 21-22nd June awaiting the attack, but the German commandos had to sneak in or to parachute into the unknown and hostile, even though as yet unalarmed enemy country. Many of them were at their assigned posts long before dawn announcing their presence by wild shots at commanders' cars that by now started to rush to their various command posts. At 2.00 hours the electricity station in Brest was mysteriously blown up and many telephone wires were cut.¹⁵ The German plan was beginning to take lethal effect.

The concern of the Red Army observation posts along the border was fed into official channels and thus began to have some effect in Moscow towards Saturday evening (21st June). However, the defence line along the border itself was not alerted. On the night 21-22nd June Guderian was satisfied with the German preparation and

14. Anlage Zu Abschnittsstab Ostpreussen, Ic/V.O. ABW.II Nr.574/41 G.K. Chefs, 3.6.41 Die Einsatzpunkte des Regiments 800.

15. Ibid. Document entitled Nachtrag zum Vortragsvermerk vom 6.6.41 unter gleicher Nummer defines exactly the objectives of sabotage; see also, L.M. Sandalov, off-print of Perezhitoe, p.183; also P.V. Sevastyanov, op.cit., p.13; see also, M. Kudryavtsev, 'Topograficheskoe obespechenie voisk v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine', VIZ, No.12, 1970, p.22. The Topographic Centre was one of the first targets to be bombed.

... the Russians convinced me that they knew nothing of our intentions. We had observation of the courtyard of Brest - Litovsk citadel and could see them drilling by platoons to the music of a military band.¹⁶

Guderian arrived at his command post south of Bohukaly, (9 miles north-west of Brest) at 3.10 hours. The artillery barrage started at 3.15 hours. 4th Company, Panzer Lehr Regiment was assembled at 22.00 hours to hear an order of the Führer, An den Soldaten der ost
front;

Soldiers of the Eastern Front!
Weighed down for many months by grave anxieties, compelled to keep silent, I can at last speak openly to you, my soldiers
About 160 Russian divisions are lined up along the border. For weeks this frontier had been violated continually - not only the frontier of Germany but also that in the far north and in Rumania.¹⁷

Long months of meticulous reconnaissance and arduous intelligence work facilitated path finding and target selection before dawn 22 June, 1941.¹⁸ The main problem was to maintain the element of surprise in a very elaborate timetable which had to make allowances for the various pace of different branches of the armed forces. Reconnaissance flights had been conducted by squadrons attached to Army Groups and

16. Guderian, op.cit., p.153.

17. Paul Carell, Hitler's War on Russia, p.4; see also Sevastyanov, op.cit., pp.7-8. Interrogating a Latvian deserter Sevastyanov asked him if German soldiers really believed that the Soviet Union had had any intentions of attacking Germany.

18. Auszugweise Abschrift (Anl. 6a zu la 200 g k. CH.) May, 1941. Document entitled Besondere Anordnungen für die Luftaufklärung. Very detailed routes and targets for tactical and operational reconnaissance.

Panzer Groups.¹⁹ Information collected by these squadrons was sifted by the staff of ground forces, but when it came to programming the attack the discrepancy of approach between the Air Force and the ground forces became plain. Complications were not alleviated by the fact that attacking so many targets simultaneously strained the resources of the Luftwaffe to breaking point.²⁰ Even after bringing forward several formations from the Balkans the Germans were facing a numerically formidable, qualitatively unknown enemy, with less aircraft per square kilometer than they had had on former campaigns.²¹

Eventually the element of surprise was to be retained by sending in small number of bombers in high altitude which were to attack before the first wave of bombers and fighters came in. The aim of the first wave was to confuse the enemy both as to the intention of the raid and to its size. This wave had completed its mission and was on its way out when the first main wave came in at 3.15 hours corresponding to the beginning of the artillery barrage in the main direction of the German attack.

While the Germans were building up their forces and particularly in the face of Russian counter measures the Wehrmacht was taking precautions against an unexpected attack. Indeed steps taken under a

19. Auszugweise Abschrift (Anl. 6a zu la 200 g k. CH.) May, 1941, op.cit., these particular air units were attached to Heeresgruppe Nord. Pz. Gr.4 und A.O.K. 18.

20. Field Marshal Kesselring, Memoirs, London, William Kimber, 1953, pp.85-90.

21. W/Cdr Asher Lee, The German Air Force, London, Duckworth, 1946, p.99. It is quite natural that Kesselring would claim that he was short of men and aircraft, but that is also Asher Lee's opinion.

plan of defence named Akte Berta helped to confuse the Soviet intelligence.²² However defensive activities were very quickly dropped and after the conference of 14th June Hitler ordered the commanders of his Army Groups to go ahead with their attacking preparation. While the Soviet Union - Government, General Staff and Armed Forces - was clumsily and hopelessly slow in apprehending the danger, large German formations were moving into their starting points, carefully aiming at well defined targets, meticulously preparing to capture bridges intact, to isolate and paralyse HQ and signalling centres.²³

Tracking and tracing the chronology of Soviet reaction to a threat which grew by the hour on the night of 21st June presents some formidable problems. Since there was no general recognition that a war situation was in the making, then there was no coherent or co-ordinated response. This platitude, mundane though it may appear, sums up the situation. Equally relevant is the fact that such Soviet plans as did exist - a defensive response to a perceived threat and preparedness for attack - did not correspond in any way to the situation which was actually developing on the frontiers. Thus it is

22. A.O.K. 4Ia, Anlage zum K.T.B. Nr. (number unreadable), Akte Berta, V. 4.6-15.6.1941, Frames Nos. 704748-704753; see also, Pogranichnie Voiska SSR 1939-1941.

23. A.O.K. 4Ia, Anlage zum K.T.B. Nr. 7U.8, BIII, Vorbereitungen zum Angriff, V. 1.5-17.6.41; Frames Nos. 704496-704504; also, Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa, vom 14.6.1941, dazu karten aus der Vorbereitung zeit und dem Aufmarsch. Frames Nos. 704781-704800; also Armee Oberkommando 6 Ia/Stomarsch Az.6 Nr. 1517/41 g.k. 16.6.41 Frame No. 704561 entitled B. Organizatorische Magnahmen, the attack orders for Panzergruppe I bzw. die Gen Kdos, to force the river Bug.

only possible to reconstruct this situation in the form of individual response to a variety of situations which produced only a series of idiosyncratic decisions. At the same time the very size of the Soviet Union prohibited simultaneous action on the side of the Germans and inevitably on the Russian side too. The documentary evidence also conveys a picture of sporadic events along a huge front in which millions of people were involved. On the night of 21st June most of the people were caught by surprise, which literally meant that they did not know what was happening.

Signals failed the Red Army even before the first German shot shattered the waiting. All day long (21 June) the alarming intelligence reports from the borders evoked no decisions and no new orders in the Kremlin.²⁴ Between eight and nine o'clock on the evening of 21 June, Timoshenko and Zhukov prepared a draft of an order to the troops and brought it to Stalin. De jure he was not the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, nor was Timoshenko; de facto Stalin did not address the troops directly, and Timoshenko could not do that either without at least Stalin's verbal approval. At 21.00 hours, Stalin refused to approve the Timoshenko-Zhukov draft.²⁵

24. Bor'ba za Sovetskiviv Pribaltiku, p.37. Reports of flares along the borders. Since 17 June the Germans had used captive balloons. According to an intelligence report General Von Lengwitz in a speech he made to the 12 Army Corps had said: '... you are the first to cross the border in our war against Russia'; see also, Nekrich, op.cit., pp.149-154; also, Anfilov, op.cit., p.184; see also Sandalov, Perezhito, p.90; also Zhukov, op.cit., pp.251-252. This sequence is not convincing. It is not clear why Stalin authorized Order No.1 on the basis of one report in which he did not entirely believe. For a different account of Stalin's reaction on Saturday 21st June, morning, see I.V. Tyulenev, op.cit., p.140; see also, A. Shimanskii, M. Molokhov, 'Za vysokii ideinyi uroven voenno-memuarnoi literatury', VIZ, No.7, 1967, p.87. Two thirds of PVO Moscow consisted of YAK-1, MIG-3 and LAGG-3.

25. Zhukov, op.cit., p.252.

Reports from the borders disclosed German deserters' stories, all pointing to an imminent German attack. Between 21.00 hours and 22.00 hours, while the Timoshenko-Zhukov draft was being watered down, Zhukov advised MDs commanders of chiefs or staff to stand by for an important message.

Zakharov, Chief of Staff, Odessa MD, was called to the bodo (telegraph) at 22.00 hours, whereupon he was ordered by his commander, Colonel-General Ya.T. Cherevichenko (C-in-C Odessa MD), to stand by the telegraph for an important message from Moscow. Zakharov was also told that Cherevichenko himself would come to his HQ in Tiraspol on the 9.00 p.m. train the next day (22 June). To make absolutely sure that the message, when it came, would be received without a hitch, Cherevichenko inquired whether Zakharov knew how to decode telegraphic messages. Satisfied on this point, Cherevichenko left the matter with his Chief of Staff. Upon receiving this order, Major-General Zakharov alerted his chief of coding department and then personally asked the officer on duty in the General Staff in Moscow when he could expect the 'most important message', but the officer on duty had not been informed. At 23.00 hours,²⁶ Zakharov (using the telegraph CT-35) alerted Major-General D.G. Yegorov, Commander of the 14th Rifle Corps; Major-General I.F. Dashichev,

26. L.M. Sandalov, Perezhito, p.90. At approximately the same hour Korobkov, Commander of 4th Army and Sandalov his COS had a telephone call from Klimovskii instructing them to assemble all the Army's Commanders in HQ. Compare Korobkov's behaviour in the Opera to that of Pavlov in the theatre: Nekrich, op.cit., pp.151-152; see also I.V. Boldin, Stranitsy Zhizni, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1961, p.81. The conversation between Pavlov and Colonel S.V. Blokhin his intelligence officer in the theatre on the night of Saturday, 21st June.

Commander of the 35th Rifle Corps; Colonel M.D. Gretsov, Chief of Staff, 2nd Cavalry Corps (its commander, Major-General P.A. Belov was on holiday in the district rest house - sanatorium - in Odessa); and Major-General Malinovskii, Commander of the 48th Rifle Corps (communication with him was by Morse telegraph). Whatever the political considerations delaying the Moscow message, Major-General Zakharov guessed its possible contents. He ordered his commanders to put staffs and troops on the alert, to move their units out of populated areas, to order units of the Covering Army to occupy their regions, and to establish contact with Frontier Troops' units. Zakharov, taking emergency measures on his own initiative, managed to alert 7 rifle, 2 cavalry, 2 tank and motorized divisions, and 2 fortified areas. Major-General Michugin the MD Air Force Commander who was ordered to disperse his airplanes in operative airfields before dawn argued that they might be damaged in the process. However, having been given a written order, he complied.

At exactly 2.00 a.m., 22nd June, the officer on duty in the General Staff cabled:

The G.S. officer on duty speaking,
(U aparata otvetsvennyi dezhurnyi Genshtaba)
 receive telegram of utmost importance and
 immediately forward it to the Military Soviet.²⁷

The telegram, signed by Timoshenko and Zhukov read as follows:

27. M.V. Zakharov, op.cit., Voprosy istorii, No.5, 1970, p.46, but see the whole article for an account of the Soviet Union and particularly the Southern border on the eve of the war; see also, Anfilov, Nachalo Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny, p.48.

To Commanders of Frontier Military Districts

1. In the course of 22 - 23.6.41 a surprise attack by the Germans is possible on the fronts of Leningrad, Baltic Special, Western Special, Kiev Special and Odessa Military Districts. A German attack may begin with provocative actions.
2. The assignments for our forces - not to give way to provocative actions of any kind which might produce major complications. At the same time troops of the Leningrad, Baltic Special, Western Special, Kiev Special and Odessa Military Districts are to be at full combat readiness to meet a surprise attack by the Germans or their allies.
3. I thereby order:
 - a. During the night of 22.6.41 secretly to man the fire points of the fortified districts (URs) on the state frontier;
 - b. Before dawn 22.6.41 to disperse on field aerodromes all aircraft including Red Army support aviation, and thoroughly camouflage them.
 - c. All units to be put at combat readiness. The troops should disperse and camouflage.
 - d. Anti-aircraft defence is to be put in combat readiness without supplementary mobilized personnel. All measures should be prepared to black out cities and installations.
 - e. No other measures are to be taken without special authorization.²⁸

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28. This text is based on Anfilov, op.cit., p.186 and Zhukov, op.cit., pp.252-253, which are identical. However the directive must have been much longer judging by the time of transmission. It is improbable that all signals lines were cut or broken at that early hour, although it is quite possible that there were disruptions after 2.00 hours.
- Order No.1 was entitled 'O razvertyvanii voisk s sootvestvii s planom prikritiya mobilizatsii i strategicheskogo sosredotocheniya'. See J. Erickson, 'The Soviet response to surprise attack: Three Directives, 22nd June, 1941; Reprinted from Soviet Studies, a quarterly journal on the USSR and Eastern Europe, Vol.XXIII, No.4, April, 1972, p.533.

Colonel Bagramyan, Chief of Operations, Kiev MD, was on his way to the new HQ in Ternopol. He had been driven in a motor car, leading a long column of 'soft' vehicles which kept breaking down throughout the night of 21-22 June. He was extremely worried lest he fail to reach his destination by dawn of 22 June.²⁹ In Ternopol, General Dobikin, Chief of Signals, Kiev MD, had managed to establish contact between Ternopol, Moscow and the District Armies. It was quite an achievement, considering that the order to move Kiev MD's HQ to Ternopol had only been given on 19 June. Dobikin had only a fraction of his command operational. On the night of 21-22 June he had found that instead of the 4 Line Battalions of the Front, 8-10 Telegraph-Constructing, Telegraph Operating companies and 5-6 Field and Pole Wire Line construction and operating companies which he should have had according to the plan of mobilisation [MP-41] he had only one signals regiment.³⁰ He based his signals network - telephone, telegraph and radio - on those of the NKS (Narkom svyazi). At 24.25 hours, the telegraph in Ternopol sprang to life. It was the beginning of a long dispatch from Moscow of 'the utmost importance'.

The Commander of Western MD, was not in his HQ, nor was his Chief of Staff.³¹ The Chief of Signals, General A.T. Grigorev, was

29. Bagramyan, op.cit., p.85.

30. Voennie svyazisti, pp.128-129.

31. Nekrich, op.cit., pp.151-152; see also Zhukov, op.cit., p.255. Zhukov writes that he spoke on the same night with Kuznetsov - Commander of Baltic MD, Pavlov - Commander of Western MD, Kirponos - Commander of Kiev MD, and their COS but he does not disclose when he spoke to them, nor does he mention speaking to Cherevichenko - Commander of Odessa MD and Popov - Commander of Leningrad MD. For their whereabouts see pp.204, Ch.IV, 230, Ibid; also B.V. Bychevskii, Gorod Front, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1963, p.7. According to Bychevskii Popov returned from Murmansk only on the 23rd June.

200 km. away from the Western MD's HQ, in Minsk. Grigorev's signals centre was in Volkovysk, not far from the border where he had elements of the 36th Independent Signals Regiment's equipment, but hardly any operative units.³² Lieutenant-General Popov, too, was not at his command post in Leningrad, when the Timoshenko-Zhukov Directive started to come through.

While Stalin was pondering over the draft of the directive, more intelligence reports were flowing in from the borders. The deserters' reports, streaming in as their interrogation progressed, were alarming. The German soldiers could name their units, as well as the time and nature of the attack which their units were ordered to carry out. All their stories dovetailed - could they then all be provocateurs? Each one mentioned the same night and the same hour for the beginning of the attack.³³ If it was deception, it was an

32. Voennie svyazisti, p.130.

33. Bor'ba za Sovetskiv Pribaltiku, p.37. On 20.6.41 Unit 107 of the Frontier Troops interrogated a German deserter - a Private from 58 Regiment, 6 Infantry Division which had arrived from Paris and was told that war against the USSR would start in 8-10 days. Zhukov, op.cit., p.254. On 21.6.41 Kiev MD reported a German deserter - a Sergeant Major. V.V. Platonov, op.cit., p.19. At midnight Kiev MD reported another deserter from 222 Infantry Regiment, 74 Infantry Division. Bagramyan, op.cit., p.91. 5 Army reported a deserter - a Feldfebl who disclosed that the attack would start at 4.00. N.A. Antipenko, Na Glavnom Napravlenii, Moscow, 'Nauka', 1971, p.53. Frontier Troops HQ reported a deserter - a Private who had said that the 'attack' would start at 4.00. K. Rokossovsky, Soldatski Dolg, Voenizdat, 1972, p.9. A report of a deserter - a Pole serving in the German Army who had stated that the Germans were preparing to attack on 22nd June. Pogranichiye Voiska SSSR 1939-1941, p.404. [Document No.401 dated not before 21st June 1941.] Report of Efreitor Liskow Alfred Helmanovich of 222 Sapper Regiment who had disclosed that his unit was to force the Bug after an artillery barrage during the night 21st-22nd June.

ingenious plan exercised with great precision. Little wonder that it took so long to authorize the directive, which, when it was eventually issued at 24.25 hours, bore the traces of the confrontation which had been part of the process of drafting the document in its final form. It took an hour and thirty-five minutes before it was received in full in Tiraspol. In Ternopol, it was received in full only at 2.30 a.m., and in Minsk only at 3.00 a.m. From MDs' HQs, the Moscow dispatch was transmitted on to the Armies HQs, thence down along the line to the units on the first line of defence.³⁴ Yet by 3.15, the first reports of enemy fire and air raids on Ochakov and Sevastopol started to reach local HQ. Many of the first enemy activities were directed precisely at the lines of communication which at this very moment were carrying the alert signal to the troops on the border; meanwhile in HWs, the signal 'Groza' was received - i.e. commanders started to tear at their 'red packages' which contained instructions relating to the contingency of war - while soldiers in advanced positions had already been engaged by enemy fire.³⁵

Three and a half hours elapsed between the time Timoshenko, Zhukov and Vatutin felt that the data they had received from the borders

34. Sandalov, op.cit., p.92. 4th Army HQ in Kobrin received Order No.1 at 3.30. All telephone and telegraph lines of the HQ were cut at about 2.00 and repaired after about an hour; see also Boldin, op.cit., p.86. 3rd and 4th Armies managed to decode only part of the message before the beginning of the German attack, while 10th Army received it only after the beginning of the attack.

35. Anfilov, op.cit., p.197; see also Sandalov, Perezhitoe, p.98. Until 3.30 hours, 22nd June 17 out of 20 posts of Frontier Troops had nothing to report, while two others South of Brest reported noise of tanks approaching the river Bug and one reported a deserter; also Boldin, op.cit., p.86. According to Boldin Order No.1 included also an instruction to open the Red Envelopes.

justified calling the alarm, and the time that they were ultimately authorized to send the directive. It took another two hours and thirty-five minutes from the beginning of dispatch until it was received, decoded and comprehended in all MDs. Further down the line, in the 9th Mechanized Corps of the 5th Army, Rokossovsky received the message on the telephone at 7.00 a.m.³⁶ He was ordered by the Deputy Chief of Operations, 5th Army, to open the top secret 'red package'. Rokossovsky was uncertain as to the authenticity of the message. According to regulations, he could open the 'red package' only on direct orders from the Chairman of Sovnarkom or from the Commissar of Defence. He decided to verify the message both locally and in Moscow and meanwhile called for his Chief of Staff, his Political Deputy and his Chief of Special Section in order to prepare for any crucial decisions. However, it was already too late for such an extensive process of verification. While Rokossovsky was discussing the situation with his senior commanders, all of whom felt that the telephone message from the 5th Army had been too unreliable to act upon, the officer on duty informed him that communication had been disrupted and that he could not get in touch with either Moscow, the district command in Kiev, or the 5th Army command in Lutsk.³⁷

Although the Germans concentrated their efforts on eliminating communications between HQ and the troops, that is between commanders and soldiers, in order to isolate the units by disrupting the chain of

36. Bychevskii, op.cit., p.6, claims to have received Order No.1 only at 8.00 hours.

37. K.K. Rokossovsky, Soldatskii Dolg, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1972, p.10.

command, some information had filtered through.³⁸ German air-raids and subversion achieved a chaotic confusion in the flow of information from the centre to the front and back again. Some commanders knew what some of their soldiers were doing, certain units maintained incessantly interrupted communication with some other units, but no-one had either a complete or a true description of the situation along the whole front.

In Moscow, the mood in which the first directive of 24.25 hours had been formulated prevailed (namely, cautiously preparing for defence while trying not to precipitate any attack) until well into the following morning. Stalin was shaken when he was first told about the German attack. Significantly his immediate reaction was political - diplomatic in nature and not military.³⁹ For some time, between the first reports of large scale German air-raids which reached Moscow at about 4.00 a.m. and the official declaration of war handed by Schulenburg to Molotov at 5.30 a.m.,⁴⁰ Stalin and the Soviet leadership could still maintain the crumbling hope that it had all been a large scale provocation, although the logic of this argument led also to the conclusion that Germany wanted war. But even after realizing that this was war, there was little Stalin could do.

38. On occasions those lines which were not cut were used by local agents to further confuse Soviet commanders, see for instance Fedyuninskii, op.cit., p.18. A false emergency call from a village SOVET.

39. Zhukov, op.cit., p.256.

40. NSR, p.347. The text of the German Declaration of War sent from Berlin by radio on 21st June, 1941. It was signed by Ribbentrop and addressed to Schulenburg who was instructed to hand it over to Molotov.

On the night of 21-22 June 1941, Stalin was the General Secretary of the Communist Party, the Chairman of the Council of Commissars, but not the Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army. He had neither the staff nor the facilities to proceed as head of state and as commander-in-chief of the armed forces.⁴¹ Moreover, the initial German success in disrupting so many signals lines deprived Stalin, Timoshenko and Zhukov of first-hand coherent information from the battle field. They knew that only a relatively small percentage of the Red Army could have been committed during the first hours of battle. They also knew by noon, 22 June, that fighting had broken out in many places along the Western borders. There was some comfort in this information. If Stalin had ever suspected that the Red Army would not fight, he could sigh with relief - the worst had not happened. Although the scarcity of troops along the borders and the way they were deployed were the result of a chain of blunders, on the morning of 22 June 1941, it seemed that the bulk of the Red Army was still intact and the situation, as looked at from Moscow, did not seem desperate. With no other information as yet about the size and the direction of the German attack Stalin, Timoshenko and Zhukov's assessments were based on intelligence reports which had been collated on the eve of the war. The gist of this information was that Germany would be able to use only 50 per cent of its forces against the Soviet Union if war was to break out, while keeping the other 50 per cent in

41. S.M. Shtemenko, Generalnyi shtab v gody voiny, Voenizdat, 1968, pp.30-31; see also, I.V. Tyulenev, Cherez Tri Voyny, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1960, p.142. Already after the beginning of the German attack Tyulenev was asked by Voroshilov where the command post of the High Command was. He replied that he had never been asked to prepare such a post and offered his own command post at Moscow MD's HQ which also served the PVO.

Western Europe, the Balkans and the Mediterranean.⁴²

In the field, even the commanders who guessed what had happened were very cautious in assessing their own situation. Those who by 4.00 a.m. had already been pressed hard did not have time to think about their neighbours, while desperately fighting for their lives.

Very early in the morning, 3rd Army Commander Lieutenant-General V.I. Kuznetsov made an accurate guess at the pattern of the German attack when he reported to Minsk, HQ of the West Front:

At 4.00, 22.6.41, the enemy crossed the border in a sector stretching from Sopotskin to Avgustov, bombed Grodno, including the Army HQ. All wire contact with units is broken, we switched to radio, two radio stations have been destroyed.⁴³

At about 8.30 a.m., Kuznetsov managed to report again to the effect that:

At 7.15, 16 airplanes bombed Grodno from a height of 1000 m. There are fires in Grodno Wire communication is broken and until 8.00 hours no radio communication was established. Signals messengers have been sent out to the units.⁴⁴

Major-General A.A. Korobkov reported to HQ that:

42. Zhurov, op.cit., p.227; see also I.V. Tyulenev Cherez Tri Voiny, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1960, p.141. Conversation between Timoshenko and Tyulenev on the evening of Saturday 21st June.

43. Anfilov, op.cit., p.221; see also Boldin, op.cit., p.84.

44. Ibid.

At 4.15, 22.6.41, the enemy started to fire at the fortress of Brest ... There was no information about the 49th Rifle Division.⁴⁵

General of the Army D.G. Pavlov was hardly in a position to help his harassed commanders. Not only was he himself lost amidst the broken pieces of information which trickled in, but he also lacked the means to assemble his signals system which had fallen asunder. His Chief of Signals, General A.T. Grigorev, who had originally been ordered to proceed to Volkovysk where the field command and a small signals centre were meant to be established, was now ordered to come back to Minsk as Volkovysk was under immediate threat of occupation. By the time Grigorev arrived in Volkovysk with his signals equipment and what few signallers he had before full mobilization (all under German air-raids), he had to go all the way back to Minsk. Having thus rushed 400 km. to Volkovysk and back, he set out to establish communication with HQ and with units that had now been in the thick of battle for hours. Not much better was the lot of Colonel I.F. Akhremenko, Chief of Signals 13th Army. He was on his way, with the 675th Independent Battalion of Signals, to Novogrudok. While they were on their way, Pavlov changed the destination of the 13th Army Staff, but Colonel Akhremenko learned about the change too late, whereupon he changed course forthwith in a desperate attempt to fulfil the new order.⁴⁶

45. Anfilov, *op.cit.*, p.221; see also Baldin, *op.cit.*, p.84; see also Sandalov, *op.cit.*, p.92. According to Sandalov the German barrage started at 4.00 hours.

46. *Voennie svyazisti*, pp.130-131; see also Anfilov, *op.cit.*, p.221; also Bagramyan, *op.cit.*, p.89. Endless reports about difficulties in radio communication testify to lack of experience in their use, to the bombing of many radio stations but it may also suggest some German jamming device.

The South-West Front had reports from the 12th Army to the effect that the Hungarian border was quiet, and from the 26th Army where German pressure had not yet been fully exercised, but communication with the 5th and 6th Armies had been completely disrupted. General Ptukhin, Chief of the Air Force, SW. Front, was unable to contact his units in the airfields, nor were the vnos (vozdushnoye nabliudeniye, opoveshchniye i sviaz) - Aircraft Warning Service - people able to cope with all the enemy aircraft and to give useful instructions to fighter wings.⁴⁷ 180 planes were lost before 10.00 a.m.

Colonel P.M. Kurochkin, Chief of Signals North-West Front, managed to operate wire and radio signals with Moscow and with Army HQs. He had one radio station in the command point in Panevezhys and five others about 2 km. away, but since the beginning of German air-raids, all these stations had either been destroyed altogether or else had come under such pressure that they had almost stopped functioning. Especially affected was the 11th Army which suffered the main blow of the initial German attack. It was effectively cut off from its neighbours, its units isolated and then some of them cut to pieces. Despite great effort, the NW. Front command did not succeed

47. P. Batitskii, 'Razvitie Voisk PVO Strany v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny', VIZ, No.9, 1972, p.16; see also Anfilov, op.cit., p.188. Aircraft Warning Service (VNOS) failed to notify all air units simultaneously of enemy approaching planes; see also Zhukov, op.cit., p.255. The Black Sea Fleet had some minutes advance warning. Admiral Oktyabr'skii telegraphed Zhukov at 3.17 minutes about approaching aircraft and was given permission to open fire.

in co-ordinating the activities of the 8th and the 11th Armies.⁴⁸ Into the 'signals vacuum' between the two Armies the Germans stuck a wedge which was getting deeper before local commanders and certainly commanders in Moscow knew what was happening.

As a result of a systematic destruction of signals, the command of the NW. Front and the commanders of the 8th and the 11th Armies as well as their staffs could not assess correctly the situation while simultaneously reporting to the General Staff, taking necessary decisions and organizing their large and small units.⁴⁹

Commanders who were educated to give orders face to face, or to use the telephone as a second best, were utterly lost when they were left with radio signals as the only means of controlling their troops.⁵⁰ Before 9.00 a.m. on 22 June, Kirponos complained:

'If the signals service keeps functioning so badly, how will we be able to command our troops?'
(Yesli i vpred svyaz budet rabotat tak plokho, to kak zhe my smozhem upravlyat voiskami?)⁵¹

48. Bor'ba za Sovetskuyu Pribaltiku, p.62. The route of 48th Rifle Division, 8th Army, was the result of 'disorientation' and complete surprise; see also Anfilov, op.cit., pp.221-222. 29th Tank Division on the road to Sopotskin could not ask for the help of 3rd Army for lack of signals communication while 3rd Army reported the bombardment of its HQ and radio stations; see also Sandalov, Perezhito, p.94. 4th Army HQ bombed.

49. Anfilov, op.cit., p.217.

50. Field Service Regulations [PU-90] Section 29 emphasizes the importance of personal contact between commander and subordinate to ensure comprehension of orders. Second best is a telephone in case the commander cannot reach his subordinate or invite him to his place. Remnants of these notions can be found even in the most modern Soviet writing, see, for instance Major-General U. Ivanov, 'Tankisti vosstanavlivayut boesposobnost', Voennyi Vestnik, No.8, 1972, p.23.

51. Bagramyan, op.cit., p.90.

The commanders themselves did not know how to use the radio stations,⁵² so they had to count on their radio operators, a process which at crucial moments is too cumbersome for instant decisions. However Signals Troops were not mobilized until the second day of war and on several occasions the radio-operators were ordered to function as rifle patrols.⁵³

There were very few radio stations in the first place, and many of these were destroyed by the first German strike. The equipment was obsolete, no transmission and no receiving was possible while in movement, and static radio cars became easy prey to low flying German fighters whose command of the air was rapidly becoming absolute. Major-General M.P. Vorobev, Chief of Engineers, W. Front, reported on the radio the exact location of the mines, in clear.⁵⁴ It was neither whim nor carelessness, since code instructions were locked in HQ safes to be opened only after mobilization.⁵⁵

Moscow was officially informed about the opening of hostilities at 5.30 a.m., 22nd June 1941. Henceforth it was no longer a question of how to prevent war, but rather of how to conduct it. Items of information that streamed in after 3.15 a.m. left too many blank

52. Voennie svyazisti, p.132.

53. Ibid., p.136.

54. In clear - not in code; see also J. Erickson, op.cit., p.587.

55. Voennie svyazisti, p.129: see also Bychevskii, op.cit., p.5. 'Red envelopes' were also kept in safes.

spots on the map.⁵⁶ For many hours the signals channels functioned not to reflect the real situation at the front but rather as to project the image several commanders had, though they had, or wished to convey in some wistful fashion.⁵⁷

On the SW. Front, local commanders were trying to understand what was happening around them. They gathered that the Red Army was fighting, but they managed to send the first report to Moscow only at 15.00 hours because of lack of information. The report gave neither a clear nor a true picture of the situation. Chief of Staff, W. Front, Klimovskii, sent his first report to Moscow at 22.00 hours. In spite of not having had any contact with the 4th Army all day long, he still led Moscow to believe that the 4th Army was holding its own on the border. Actually by that time the Germans had penetrated to a depth of 60-70 km., leaving Brest behind them. At the same time (22.00 hours) General Klenov, Chief of Staff NW. Front, reported to the General Staff that the Front was still defending the border,

56. A.M. Vasilevskii, 'K. voprosu o rukovodstve vooruzhennoi bor'boi v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine', *Voprosy istorii*, No.5, 1970, p.63; see also I.T. Starinov, *Miny Zhdut Svoego Chasa*, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1964, p.194. Midday, 22nd June in Pinsk airfield under air raid everybody thought that only Pinsk airfield was bombed and in other places it was different; see also Zhukov *op.cit.*, p.273; also, I.V. Boldin, *op.cit.*, p.91, 22nd June, 21.00 hours - 10th Army had not yet sent a report despite the fact that it had radio; also Pedyuminskii, *op.cit.*, p.15. 22nd June, early morning, all contact with 5th Army was severed; also Rokossovskii, *op.cit.*, p.11. 22nd June, morning, Staff Officer in Lutsk did not know what the situation was.

57. I.T. Starinov, *op.cit.*, p.193. The news bulletin on Moscow radio on 22nd June, at 6.00 hours is a symptom of the confusion and impotence of the Soviet government under the impact of surprise, and the disruption in the flow of information.

whereas in fact the Germans had managed to seize bridges - wholly intact - over the Neman. The 4th Pontoon and Bridging Regiment (11th Army) under the command of Major N.P. Belikov had been allocated, according to plan, the task of destroying the four bridges over the Neman. At 13.00 hours, Belikov carried out his orders and destroyed three of the bridges. At 14.00 hours, Belikov was ordered by Lieutenant-Colonel Firsov, Chief of Engineers (11th Army) to carry out his preplanned orders, namely to destroy the fourth bridge, but by that time there was no communications contact with any other superior officer. Many Soviet units were stranded on the southern side of the Neman and their commanders who controlled the withdrawal of their units through the last remaining bridge did not allow Major Belikov to destroy it.⁵⁸ This tug of war between two different interests lasted so long that some of Belikov's men were eventually captured by the Germans, who were also racing towards that same bridge.

At 9.45 a.m., Colonel-General Kuznetsov, Commander-in-Chief NW. Front, ordered a counter-attack to be carried out by the 12th and 3rd Mechanized Corps under the general command of the 8th Army. The aim was to hit at the rear of the German Army which was pushing towards Taurage. The order instructed the 3rd Mechanized Corps (minus 5th Tank Division) to carry out its attack on the night of 22-23 June. Unfortunately, owing to the break-down in signals, the 3rd Mechanized

58. Anfilov, op.cit., p.216; see also, Sandalov, op.cit., pp.98-99. Description of the capture of the River Bug bridges. According to Sandalov the bridges were seized 5-10 minutes before the beginning of the artillery barrage; see also, Starinov, op.cit., p.196. The capture of the River Bug bridges including the mined railway bridge of Brest; see also Guderian, op.cit., p.153. It is interesting to note that an hour or so before the beginning of the barrage Guderian thought of abandoning it in order to achieve surprise because he was so sure that the Russians were unprepared.

corps received the message only in the evening. Consequently it had no time to prepare for the attack. However, General Klenov, in his report of 22.00 hours, gave the General Staff the impression that the attack in the direction of Taurage was on its way.⁵⁹

Towards evening on the 22nd of June, General Ptukhin, Commander of the Air Force SW. Front, managed to organize the remnant of his forces. By that time the colossal scale of the attack could no longer be in any doubt. Yet towards evening, the pace of the flow and processing of information was much slower than that of the German attack. Some units could be contacted only by delegates.⁶⁰ In the middle of the morning (desperate for information) Colonel-General Kirponos, Commander SW. Front, was obliged to order Colonel Bagramyan, his Chief of Operations, and Colonel Bondarev, his Chief of Intelligence, to go on a fact-finding mission:

Go, Colonels, and at any price bring in a reliable and concrete report about the troops.⁶¹

It was a tormenting decision with which the Soviet commanders were faced time and again. Kirponos had to choose between keeping his best analysts and organisers in the office, ready to render their services if and when information started flowing again, and sending them out.

59. Anfilov, op.cit., pp.217-218.

60. Ibid., p.225; see also, Shtemenko, op.cit., p.30; also, Sandalov, op.cit., p.97; also Boldin, op.cit., pp.84-85, 87-88. Pavlov's trip to Belostok and Boldin's trip to 10th Army HQ; also, Rokossovskii, op.cit., p.15. Attempts to contact 19th and 22nd Mechanized Corps by delegates.

61. Bagramyan, op.cit., p.90; see also Rokossovskii, op.cit., during the whole day [22nd June] Rokossovskii could not contact SW. Front's HQ.

By sending out Bagramyan and Bondarev, he guaranteed the best possible on-the-spot information, collation and processing, but on the other hand he sacrificed time and risked the lives of his staff over and above losing their analytical power while they were away on their mission. Bagramyan and Bondarev's findings nevertheless became the basis for the SW. Front report which was sent to Moscow at 15.00 hours.⁶²

Although they had only part of the picture, all the commanders felt that they had been hard pressed and harassed by the Germans' advance:

Towards the evening of the 22nd of June, the very thought of an immediate counter-offensive (kontrnastuplenie) had not crossed the mind of even one amongst the commanders and staff of our front. If only we could hold on.
(Lish be vistoyat)⁶³

Moscow obviously had different ideas. At 23.00, HQ SW. Front received a directive signed by Timoshenko. The General Staff had rightly assessed the direction of the main German attack, but had only scant idea regarding both the position of the Soviet units and, as far as SW. Front was concerned, what had happened since the last report had been sent at 15.00 hours. Regarding the W. Front and the NW. Front, the assessment at 23.00 was impossible because these fronts' reports

62. Bagramyan, op.cit., p.112. Bagramyan admits that this report was sent before there was any real information available.

63. Ibid., p.111; see also Boldin, op.cit., p.94. Being on the spot Boldin knew that the 10th Army was not in a position to conduct any offensive operations; see also, Fedyuninskii, op.cit., The German pressure on the link between the 5th and 6th Armies created terrible problems for 124th and 87th Rifle Divisions in Ustilug district. By the morning 23rd June the 124th Division had to retreat towards the River Styr and the 87th towards Vladimir-Volynskii.

had arrived in Moscow at only 22.00 hours, by which time they had guessed in Moscow that these reports were inaccurate. On the basis of the 15.00 hours SW. Front report, the General Staff and the Commissar of Defence could not have known about two German motorized corps, one moving in the direction of Sokal-Radzheduv and the other on Ustilug-Lutsk.⁶⁴ The rest of Timoshenko's directive gave orders to mount counter-attacks on all fronts, and instructed the front commanders in great detail which troops to use and for what purpose, all based, of course, on the reports from the fronts.⁶⁵ Reading Directive No. 3 Bagramyan thought:

Automatically it has occurred to me that the optimistic assessment in the document, which has been sent from the centre, is in large part based upon our own rather cheerful reports. (... vo mnogom bil naveyan i nashimi davol'no bodrim donesenyami)⁶⁶

During the first twenty hours of war the Germans succeeded in effecting what might be called reverse anaesthesia - only the area affected came painfully to life, while the rest of the body politic was neutralized. According to their plan the Germans had achieved surprise, as Halder duly noted - the Red Army was caught unawares and the delirium of shock seized the echelons immediately involved in battle. By destroying signal nets, the Germans wrought havoc among commanders

64. Fedyuninskii, op.cit., p.17. The situation of 87th Rifle Division near Ustilug.

65. A.M. Vasilevskii, 'K voprosu o rukovodstve vooruzhennoi bor'boi v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine', Voprosy istorii, No.5, 1970, p.52. According to Vasilevskii the policy of an all-out counter-offensive which was adopted at the beginning of the war was wrong and caused unnecessary casualties.

66. Bagramyan, op.cit., p.111.

who lost contact with each other and with their units. By high speed thrusts the Germans managed to isolate, encircle and on many occasions rout small units and dispersed strong-points, with little loss of time.⁶⁷ Under the impact of German artillery barrages and fast moving armour, the channels of command and control in advanced units were effectively choked or broken; on a larger scale they managed to cut the channels between Front HQ and Armies' HQ, and between these and the High Command in Moscow.⁶⁸ The immediate effects were unexpected. The first line Soviet soldiers, many of whom were professionals, went on fighting, although they were stunned and confused, while the Soviet High Command, aware of an attack but ignorant of the way it was developing, became extremely worried by the scarcity of information, but by no means desperate. In other words professional soldiers and commanders reacted in the way they had been trained to react for years - the soldiers used all the fire-power they could produce until they were out of ammunition, exhausted, wounded or dead, and the commanders tried to analyse a highly baffling situation in order to make or to improvise decisions.⁶⁹ For some time the lack of rapport between soldiers and commanders did not have the catastrophic effect that surprise is designed to create.

However, this situation could not last long. Feverish steps

67. Rokossovskii, op.cit., p.14. On its way towards the front Rokossovskii could see the effect of the German success by the stream of stragglers (Okruzhentsev) who escaped battles of encirclement.

68. Vasilevskii, op.cit., Voprosy istorii, No.5, 1970, p.52.

69. Fedyuninskii, op.cit., p.15. An order to give ammunition to soldiers; see also, Rokossovskii, op.cit., p.11.

were taken in an attempt to redress it. Since radios were scarce, unused or misused, there was a constant struggle between telephone and telegraph linesmen and German low-flying bombers which made endless sorties to prevent the establishment of signals links between HQs and units. The existing lines were cut time and time again, or else became congested.⁷⁰

After the official declaration of war had been handed over at 5.30 a.m., the Soviet High Command realized that it had no information about the main directions of the German blows, and no quick and reliable way of finding out. The people in the General Staff, haggard after a long sleepless night, had realized how narrow was the scope of any reasonable action; moreover, the existing plan KOVO-41, which had been meticulously worked out and revised for an emergency, proved to be too drastic for the situation as it was seen at the time.⁷¹ It was a plan to mobilize the whole country - man-power, industry, front and rear from Brest to Vladivostok. It meant martial law over the whole country and a complete halt to every activity other than military. Until 7.15 a.m., 22 June, no-one in the Soviet leadership had felt that such extreme measures were necessary. Furthermore, since the liaison between the military machine and the political apparatus had not yet been established such a move could hardly be conceivable. For the time being the military and the Polithburo were functioning

70. On 2nd July, 1941, Lieutenant-General G.K. Malandin [who replaced Klimovskii as Chief of Staff WF] informed the CGS that the Signals Units of WF had not been mobilized and that the Signal Units of 3rd, 4th and 13th Armies had had 50-100 per cent casualties.

71. Bagramyan, op.cit., p.92; compare B. Collier, The Battle of Britain, London, Collins, p.120, the difficulties of putting 'Cromwell' ('invasion imminent') into operation.

side by side in a somewhat cumbersome fashion. Conducting operations on a tactical scale fell within the responsibility of the General Staff, but for lack of information, and under the impact of the dramatic shift from diplomatic to military activity, the tendency was to make decisions of a strategic nature. The Politburo, the Commissariat for Defence and the General Staff, cut off from the events upon which they were called to adjudicate, and with no chain of command, fell back on mechanical reactions and equally mechanical formulae about the need to stop the enemy.⁷² Directive No.2 of 7.15 a.m., issued by Timoshenko and authorized by Stalin, retained some elements which had characterized Directive No.1. Zhukov suggested ordering that the troops should use full strength to hold the enemy. Timoshenko corrected:

'Annihilate, not hold up'
(Ne zaderzhat, a unichtozhit)⁷³

Due to disrupted signalling lines, Directive No.2 reached SW. Front HQ at about 10.00 a.m.⁷⁴ It read:

'At 4.00 a.m., 22 June 1941, German planes, without any cause, carried out flights over our airfields and towns along the borders and bombed them. At the same time, German troops opened artillery fire and crossed our border in several places.

72. Vasilevskii, op.cit., p.63, claims that during some time at the beginning of the war the High Command in Moscow received information only through the Aircraft Warning Service [VNOS]. The early warning and visual service rather like the Royal Observer Corps.

73. Zhukov, op.cit., p.256.

74. The time between issuing Directive No.2 and its receipt at the fronts was almost the same as that of Directive No.1 of 24.25 despite the difference in circumstances.

Following the unprecedented German attack on the Soviet Union, I order:

1. Troops will use their full strength and all the means at their disposal to attack and destroy enemy forces in those regions where they have crossed the Soviet border. Ground forces will not cross the border without special authorization.
2. Reconnaissance and attack planes will locate concentrations of enemy aircraft and groupings of its ground forces. Bombers will inflict strong blows, destroy aircraft on enemy airfields, and bomb the main concentrations of its ground forces. Air raids are to be carried 100-150 km. into German territory. Bomb Königsberg and Memel. No flights are to be carried out over Rumania and Finland's territory until a special authorization is given.⁷⁵

It was a restrained directive which caused some perplexity among pilots, but its fundamental shortcoming was that it could not be carried out. The whole tone of the Directive suggested that its authors were not familiar with the situation along the borders and that they still toyed with the idea of a local though large attack, that could perhaps be neutralized.

No-one in the Soviet leadership, either on the political or the military side, had had any experience in comprehensive command.⁷⁶ For the time being Stalin seemed satisfied to retain all but nominal

75. Bagramyan, *op.cit.*, pp.93-94. It is difficult to establish on what factual data Order No.2 was based, as 5th Army for instance managed to send its first report at 10.30, 22nd June. See *ibid.*, p.90; For the text of Order No.2, see also Anfilov, *op.cit.*, p.210. There are no variations.

76. Zhukov, Meretskov and Timoshenko were the most experienced commanders in the Soviet High Command, but even Zhukov had only combat experience on one front [Khalkhin Gol] large though it was, Meretskov did not do very well in the Finnish War where he was eventually replaced by Timoshenko.

control over directives and decrees. The urgency of endless details of command and control, and of defining 'strategy' or 'grand strategy',⁷⁷ could not be perceived before studying the Germans' intentions and before having the complete picture of the battlefield. The picture at 8.00 a.m. seemed grimly unclear:

There had been a powerful enemy bomb strike at many airfields in the Belorussian, Kiev and Baltic MDs, where serious damage had been inflicted on our aircraft, which had no time to take off and disperse to field airstrips.

Many towns and railway junctions in the Baltic area, Belorussia and the Ukraine, together with naval bases at Sevastopol and on the Baltic coast, had also been bombed.

Bitter fighting was going on against German land forces along our entire Western frontier. On many sectors the Germans had engaged forward units of the Red Army.

Alerted infantry units belonging to the first 'covering echelon' were going into battle from the move without time to take up prepared positions.

In the sector of Leningrad MD, all was still quiet. The enemy did not take any action.⁷⁸

At 9.30, Timoshenko and Zhukov met Stalin and presented him with a draft of a decree calling up from 23 June all reservists born between 1905 and 1918, and declaring martial law in European Russia. The commanders who were in their HQ before 10.00 a.m. could piece together even less information than their superiors in Moscow because they were already busy with a stream of command and control

77. B.H. Liddell-Hart, *Strategy - The Indirect Approach*, London, Faber and Faber Ltd., 1967 [Revised edition] pp.333-337.

78. Zhukov, *op.cit.*, p.257.

details.⁷⁹ By the time Timoshenko's Directive No. 2 reached the West and South-West Fronts, the Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force, West Front, I.I. Kopets, had already been badly shaken,⁸⁰ and Ptukhin, Commander-in-Chief of the SW. Front Air Force, had lost 180 planes and his signals system had been put out of action. He could hardly send out any planes at all. The bombers that had been sent out did not have fighter escorts and subsequently were brutally massacred.⁸¹

Towards noon, still without any clear notion of the situation along the borders, the Politburo finally decided that it was a full scale war. Molotov, Deputy Chairman of Sovnarkom and Commissar for Foreign Affairs, broadcast to the nation at 12.00 hours, 22 June 1941, announcing that the Soviet Union had been at war with Germany as from 4.00 a.m. There was still no Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces but real power lay with Stalin.⁸² At 13.00 he phoned Zhukov, told him that the Fronts commanders were inexperienced and that the Politburo had decided to send representatives (predstaviteli) to help them and coordinate operations: Colonel-General O.I. Gorodovikov to NW. Front, Marshals G.I. Kulik and B.M. Shaposhnikov to W. Front and General of the Army G.K. Zhukov to SW. Front. They were to leave

79. Rokossovskii, op.cit., p.11; see also Bagramyan, op.cit., pp.124-126,131; also Boldin, op.cit., p.86; also, Fedyuninskii, op.cit., pp.19-21.

80. I.I. Kopets committed suicide on 22nd June and was replaced by his deputy Major-General U. Tayurskii. Apart from the shock of losing a large part of his command with many of the aircraft lost on the ground Kopets was no doubt under the pressure of the purge of the Air Force and PVO commanders.

81. Rokossovskii, op.cit., p.12. By 22nd June, 14.00 hours, the Germans had air supremacy at least over the road Novgorod - Volynskii-Rovno-Lutsk, one of the main axis of the attack.

82. Starinov, op.cit., p.98. On 26th June Starinov was surprised when Timoshenko relegated to him vast authority without mentioning Stalin, but this was the period when Timoshenko was officially authorized to give such orders in his capacity as the Chairman of STAVKA which had been formed on 23rd June and of which Stalin was 'merely' a member.

immediately. To Zhukov's question, who was going to replace him as CGS, Stalin replied:

'Leave Vatutin in your place ... don't waste time, we will manage somehow.'

(my tut kak-nibud oboidemsa)⁸³

Evidently, in the centre, a process was taking place similar to that which was in progress on the fronts. There too, under the pressure created by the lack of information, it was decided to send the top people to the battle field to assess the situation and help the commanders on the spot.

The chain of command during the latter half of the first day 22 June became complicated. By virtue of their professionalism and the immediate task at hand, the military in Moscow were more active than the political institutions. They were in direct contact with those military HQs that could still respond to signals but they had no legal power to issue decrees even of a military nature. The Politburo which had been assembled by Stalin at 4.30 a.m. and had since been in constant session did not have any military information apart from the reports provided by the Commissar of Defence. But even after appraising itself of the situation, it did not have direct contact with combat units, nor was it geared to tackling such problems. The Commissariat of the Navy was still independent, operating its own signals net which had already proved more reliable than that of the Commissariat of Defence, let alone that of the Commissariat of Communications. The result was that both Timoshenko and Stalin became

83. Zhukov, op.cit., p.259.

Commanders-in-Chief, with the former initiating military decrees and the latter authorizing them wholly or partially. For lack of a Supreme High Command, the Supreme Military Council (GVS), which had been established in the wake of the purges of 1938, but which had been kept subordinate most of the time since then, was given a new lease of life. At 21.15 hours, it issued a directive to the Military Soviets (!) of NW Front, S Front and SW Front, assigning to them their immediate military tasks.⁸⁴ Further down along the chain of command were the Front Commanders with their military aides and the Military Council whose members participated in any process of decision making.⁸⁵ Among the military aides of the Front Commanders, there were professional specialists who had been sent down from Moscow to help the commanders solve problems of engineering, artillery, armoured forces warfare and signalling. Over and above this system, there were imposed as from 13.00 hours three overall commanders, who set out post-haste to discharge their duties.

Since Zhukov had to go part of the way by car, it took him a considerable time to reach his destination - Kirponos HQ in Ternopol. Leaving Moscow at about 14.00, he arrived in Kiev in the late afternoon whereupon he met Khrushchev, Chairman of the Military Council, SW Front, and was briefed about the situation. By that time, the first official report of the situation on that front had been sent to Moscow (15.00 hours) and the situation had deteriorated considerably. Arriving in Ternopol, he had a talk over the H.F. (radio) with his

84. Anfilov, op.cit., p.235. This is another indication of the lack of C-in-C of the armed forces. Two hours later [23.15 hours] Timoshenko issued Order No.3.

85. This system of decision making was not without some friction. See, for instance, Bagramyan, op.cit., pp.124-126.

replacement in Moscow - Vatutin. During this conversation he learned that Moscow had not as yet had any accurate information about either Red Army or German movements. Colonel-General F.I. Kuznetsov, Commander NW. Front, and Colonel-General D.G. Pavlov, Commander W. Front, said Vatutin, had left their HQ without reporting to the Commissar of Defence, and in their HQ there was no information of their whereabouts.⁸⁶ Zhukov further learned that Stalin had ordered Zhukov's signature to be attached to Timoshenko's Directive No.3 which had been issued at 23.15 hours, 22 June.

Timoshenko's Directive No.3 was well nigh impossible to carry out from a purely military point of view, but in a way it formulated the character of the war. The idea was to carry out unceasing and powerful counterblows. Although this strategy did not succeed in snatching the initiative, it certainly halted the German advance, it forced the Germans to throw in larger forces than they had originally planned, and it caused them telling losses in material and human lives.⁸⁷ However, having some success at the beginning, these attacks petered out after a while because the Red Army at that time could not sustain the pressure.⁸⁸ Most of the armoured formations which were

86. This is an indicator of the control that Moscow expected to have over the activities of Front commanders. See Boldin, op.cit., pp.84-85, for the sequence which led to Pavlov decision to go to Belostak. At the time of Zhukov - Vatutin conversation he might have been on his way between Belostok and his HQ in Minsk, but this HQ was already preparing to move. A comparison between Boldin, Ibid., Zhukov, op.cit., pp.277-281 and Anfilov, op.cit., p.227 create an impression that Pavlov was completely lost among the endless problems he had to solve.

87. Fedyuninskii, op.cit., p.17.

88. Ibid., pp.19-20; see also, Boldin, op.cit., pp.92-93; also Bagramyan, op.cit., pp.123-138. Chapter entitled Sil Ne Khvataet.

supposed to carry out the counterblows were still on the move under merciless air-raids, with no air cover and with little AA defence.⁸⁹ On 23 June 1941, the Central Committee and the Council of People Commissars authorized a decree calling up reservists from 14 Military Districts (except Central Asia, Trans-Baikal and the Far East districts) and announcing the establishment of the Stavka of the Soviet High Command [Stavka Glavnogo Kommandovaniya Vooruzhennykh Sil SSSR]. Its composition was as follows:

Chairman - Commissar of Defence:

Marshal S.K. Timoshenko

Chief of Staff - General of the Army:

G.K. Zhukov

Members:

J.V. Stalin

V.M. Molotov

Marshals: K.Y. Voroshilov

and S.M. Budionny

Commissar of the Navy:

Admiral N.G. Kuznetsov

89. Rotmistrov (Editor), op.cit., pp.54-55. The deployment of Mechanised forces.

This move did not resolve the duality of having two commanders-in-chief, but it created the liaison between the Political and the Military authorities and brought in the Commissariat of the Navy.⁹⁰

Given a strong-point and fire power the Red Army soldiers used both until they were destroyed. But the bulk of the Red Army was not given these two prerequisites as most units were either on their way to the front or in the process of formation, organisation and training when the war broke out. Soviet sources tend to emphasise the heroic conduct of the Red Army performance during the first three days of the Great Patriotic War, which is on the whole a true picture. Yet, while most soldiers were caught unprepared, though not all of them necessarily surprised, and fought it out the best they could,

90. For the ideological problems of regular army Versus militia see: Bukharin and Preobrazhensky. The ABC of Communism [Edited by E.H. Carr], London, Penguin Books Ltd., 1969, p.234, note in particular: '... the first people's army ... participating in the administration of the country'. p.255, the model of the Swiss Republic with its national militia pp.267-269. 'The Red Army Is Provisional'; see also A.B. Ulam, Lenin and the Bolsheviks, London, Fontana Library, 1969, p.547. The example of the French revolution and the shadow of Buonaparte. p.574 '... the attraction for the military mind of Trotsky's 'New Model': an army where professional competence and discipline were to be the ruling considerations'; see also E.H. Carr, op.cit., Vol.1, pp.105-106. The difficulty to adhere in practice to lofty ideas about 'proletariat army', Vol.2, pp.134, 140. The problem of the Tsarist officers in the Red Army, pp.398-412. The eighth and the ninth Party Congress; the 'single military doctrine'; Frunze, Tukhachevsky and the 'spirit of the offensive'; for the problem of Commissars see J. Erickson, op.cit., the entry Commissars; also the entry Command and Command Staff; also, Fainsod, op.cit., pp.465,466,468,469 deals with the problem of commissars; For the problem of the duality in the Soviet Government see W.W. Rostow, op.cit., p.63. Stalin assumption of nominal power on 7th May 1941; also L. Schapiro, op.cit., Chapter 27, mainly pp.490-493; also Sokolovsky, op.cit., [English edition] pp.358-364 deals with the facts not with the reasons; also Roman Kolkowicz, op.cit., pp.64-65. Apart from J. Erickson none of these sources deals squarely with the period 22nd June-26th June, or 22nd June-3rd July, 1941, but they all throw light on the development of dual system in Soviet military command and Soviet governmental system.

there were others who were well prepared and yet others who succumbed to the shock in one way or another. Listening to Molotov's broadcast at 12.00, 22 June one could see:

On the faces of people, which had just been gay and smiling, incredulity, confusion and even fear.⁹¹

Although it is not entirely clear what is meant by the repetitive allusions to units that had to withdraw under enemy pressure during the first three days of war, breakdown of morale suggests itself as a possible explanation.⁹²

However, many units were well prepared. The 1 Anti-tank Brigade, under the command of K.S. Moskalenko was fully motorised, there was not even one horse.⁹³ The brigade had the full complement of ammunition, including armour-piercing shells. Most of the men had completed or nearly completed their secondary education. They

91. S.S. Biryuzov, Surovie gody, Moscow, Nauka, 1966, p.13.

92. Bor'ba za Sovetskuyu Pribaltiku, p.63. The retreat of 11th Army to Kaunas and Vilna on 22nd June [... vynuzhdeny byli s bol'shimi poteryami neorganizovanno i pospeshno Otstupat ...], see also, Anfilov, op.cit., pp.247-254; also Zhukov, op.cit., pp.273-275. The disorganized command and control of 4th Army; also, Sandalov, off print of Perezhitoe, p.186. Description of a panic that overwhelmed several units at 6.00 hours, 22nd June, as a result of disorganisation, lack of initiative and cowardice of several commanders; see also, Biryuzov, op.cit., p.15 for the effects of panic on the civil population and its spread among the militia and civil authorities; also, Boldin, op.cit., p.90. Belostok, at 18.00 hours, 22nd June. The behaviour of a Senior Lieutenant under the impact of surprise; also, Colonel V. Maramzin, 'Pryt strategicheskikh oboronitel'nykh operatsii v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine', VIZ, No.10, 1970, p.24. The effect of German air supremacy on the morale of Soviet soldiers.

93. K.S. Moskalenko, op.cit., p.14; see also N. Malyugin, 'avtomobilnyi transport frontov i armii v gody voyny', VIZ, No.2, 1971, p.89. On 24th June, 47th Rifle Corps, 4th Army moved to the front on lorries. However, generally speaking logistics and transport at the beginning of the war were badly managed.

were also well equipped as far as their technical approach was concerned, since the majority of them were heavy industry workers.⁹⁴ On 21 June the tanks and artillery of Moskalenko's brigade were well hidden and camouflaged. Like so many other units the pre-war orders of the brigade were changed at the beginning of the war. The brigade, all motorised, was elastic in its manoeuvres and its commander insisted on digging the guns in and camouflaging them properly at every new position the brigade had been ordered to take. Since the Germans kept mostly to the main roads for their tanks thrusts the brigade had done the same, retreating slowly along the main axis of movement. Junior commanders and soldiers fought ably and effectively, and the brigade maintained its mobility and fire-power not only during the first three days of war but also throughout the following three months of bitter fighting.⁹⁵

The surprise attack had had an unsettling effect on commanders too. While soldiers were primarily fighting to survive, commanders had also to make decisions concerning survival of others besides themselves. Upon receiving the first news about the war, Stalin, the politician, was badly shaken, but Stalin - the commander - had not yet emerged. Timoshenko, Zhukov and Vatutin had not lost their analytical power and applied it immediately to process any piece of information which came their way. Commanders of MDs, which became Fronts at the beginning of hostilities as well as commanders of large

94. Moskalenko, op.cit., p.18.

95. Anfilov, op.cit., p.244. Conduct and tactics of 9th Anti-tank Brigade; see also Antipenko, op.cit., pp.54-56, for the conduct of 41 and 99th Rifle Division. These two held on for six days without support of tanks or air force.

formations reacted in such a variety of ways that only deep psychological and environmental analyses could account for their behaviour.

The Commander of the W. Front Air Force, I.I. Kopets could not stand the shock of losing nearly all his planes and committed suicide on the very first day of the war. Another conspicuous suicide, that of Division Commissar Vashugin was delayed a whole week, until 29 June, but even before the beginning of operations he had shown signs of great strain. Fulfilling what he felt was his duty he urged Kirponos to effect counter-attacks which proved to be ill-prepared. His loyalty to the letter of Timoshenko's Directive No.3 in the face of strong opposition on the part of the 'professional' soldiers in SW. Front HQ, led to acrimonious exchanges of words. The pressure of surprise combined with the clash of wills to mount unbearable tension. Pavlov, Commander of W. Front did not manage to recover from the first shock for a whole week. He lost control of his Armies and issued conflicting orders that helped to increase the confusion. Shaposhnikov and Kulik had been sent as representatives of the High Command to help Pavlov in his sector of the front which proved to have been subjected to the main German blow. Unfortunately Shaposhnikov fell ill and Kulik lost contact with Moscow for nearly four days.⁹⁶ Of the High Command representatives only Zhukov proved very capable. On the second day of the counter-blows (24 June) Zhukov had a long conversation over the telegraph with Potopov, commander of 5th Army.⁹⁷ During the conversation it became clear

96. Zhukov, op.cit., p.278. Conversation between Zhukov and Klimovskii on 28th June.

97. Ibid., pp.265-267. Potopov was Zhukov's subordinate in Khalkhin Gol.

that the situation locally was very difficult and getting worse, but that it was no longer in complete chaos. The 5th Army was conducting fierce battles, retreating slowly in many sectors but fighting as an organised formation. Potapov already had some idea of German intentions. His information about their strength was exaggerated; his radio system was not functioning properly but he could easily show on the map where his forces were and where the enemy was. Zhukov who had by now a fairly accurate picture of the situation as regarding forces, material and resources could already see beyond the needs of the next move. He ordered Potapov not to send infantry to the attack without the support of tanks.⁹⁸ When Potapov told him that he had 30 KV tanks but no ammunition for their heavy guns (152 mm.) Zhukov instantly told him to use the 09-30 concrete-piercing shells,⁹⁹ displaying his remarkable skill in using all his resources. When a complete breakdown of command and control befuddled the W. Front on 26 June, Zhukov rushed back to Moscow on Stalin's instruction and was ordered to work out a plan to save that Front.¹⁰⁰

Several commanders of smaller formations were killed in action within the first week of the war. Major-General Dedaev, commander of 67th Rifle Division was killed on 26 June. His division had to defend the coast line of the Baltic Sea from Libau to Ventspils a section far too extensive for one division. Also in NW. Front

98. Anfilov, *op.cit.*, p.284.

99. Shells, model 1930 which were in store in the district but which no one thought of using for the KV tanks.

100. These two occasions created a pattern. Throughout the war Zhukov was sent to whichever sector of the front was in danger of collapse, or in need of strategic analysis.

Lieutenant Colonel Avdeev was killed on 28 June. He had been COS of Major-General Lelyushenko's 21st Mechanised Corps of the High Command Reserve (RGK). On the W. Front Major-General Puganov Commander of 22nd Tank Division, 14th Mechanised Corps, 4th Army, was killed on 24 June not far from Brest. This division, like many other mechanised formations, suffered many casualties from German air-raids after the German air-supremacy had been established by the end of the first day of war. Major-General Khatskelevich Commander of 6th Mechanised Corps (10th Army) was killed in action defending the line on the river Narev, on 25 June. Major-General Nikitin, Commander of 6th Cavalry Corps, 10th Army was also killed on 25th June. Chief of Organisation and Mobilisation of the unfortunate 13th Army was also killed on the same day. Further south on SW. Front Major-General Mishanin, Commander of 12th Tank Division, 8th Mechanised Corps, (5th Army) was also severely mauled and its commander Major-General Kondrusev wounded.

There are many reasons why the commander should be in the first line with his soldiers, but it seems that several casualties were a direct result of the confusion at the beginning of the war. HQ, were attacked not only from the air but also by tanks. Command points had to move more than once to avoid encirclement and capture, and to keep in touch with retreating units.

At the beginning of the war 46% of the commanders of large formations and of Armies were older than 45 and 16% were older than 50.¹⁰¹ At that age people may be at their best, as far as their analytical power is concerned, but their physical agility tends to

101. Voprosy istorii, No.5, 1971, p.40.

deteriorate. If under the confused circumstances which had been created by the surprise attack these commanders had to exert their physical strength it might have had some effect on their performance.

Armoured formations were major victims of air-raids, premature counter-attacks and diversity of tasks as well as of bad logistics, transport and maintenance.¹⁰² Thus 41 Tank Division (22nd Mechanised Corps) was divided into small units which were then used to support infantry. In the very first hours of war the motorised regiment of this division was given to 45 Rifle Division. On the following day two tank battalions were given to 87 Rifle Division and five tanks were assigned the task to defend 5 Army's HQ. On 24 June 20 tanks were given to help 45 Rifle Division and 30 tanks to 64 Rifle Division. During the night (24 June) one tank company was ordered to deal with German parachutists and several hours later 2 tanks were taken to protect 15 Rifle Corps' HQ.¹⁰³

As the result of the surprise, the signals net collapsed with a devastating effect on command and control. The speed of the German advance created the impression that they were everywhere in force. In the frantic attempt to repel them the Soviet commanders attempted an 'active' policy, namely striking at all directions, at all costs trying to defend all along the length of the front. Only Zhukov's perceptive eye detected the weaknesses in the German tactics of deep armoured thrusts, leaving the infantry far behind. However, most Soviet armoured formations were still on the move towards the battle-

102. A. Karpenko, 'Sovershenstvovanie Tekhnicheskogo Obespecheniya Bronetankovykh Voisk v Operatsiyakh' VIZ, No.4, 1967, p.16.

103. Anfilov, op.cit., pp.289-290.

field when Zhukov was forced by local pressure of events and by harsh orders from Moscow to apply the available armoured units piece-meal.

The immediate results of the German surprise were very heavy losses inflicted on the Air Force resulting in German air supremacy, loss of armoured forces and the lack of any armoured mass, heavy casualties and loss of territory. That latter loss meant the constriction of both space and time, and thus further casualties.¹⁰⁴ Surprise finally confused the priorities, because without information no Soviet commander was in a position to decide which of three elements was to be traded: was it to be time, space or blood?

104. K. Malan'in, 'Razvitie organizatsennykh form sukhoputnykh voisk v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine', *VIZ*, No.8, 1967, p.30. Already in July the Red Army was forced to reduce rifle divisions manpower by 25%, 66% anti-tank and regimental (heavy) artillery, 50% machinegun and 75% automatic small arms. For German account of Soviet Generals killed or captured see: Oberkommando des Heeres Gen STdH. O Qu IV-Abt., Fremde Heere Ost (IIb) Nr.2383/41, H. Qu. den 27 October, 1941, Frames No. 443384-44386.

SOVIET FORMATIONS AND UNITS MENTIONED IN SOVIET
SORCES AS COMMITTED TO ACTION ON 22ND JUNE, 1941.¹

Formations²

51 Rifle Divisions
20 Tank Divisions
9 Motorized Divisions
5 Cavalry Divisions

Commanders³

1 General of the Army
20 Lieutenant-Generals
53 Major-Generals
1 Colonel-General
27 Colonels
5 Commissars of the Corps
3 Commissars of the Division

-
1. Air Force, Naval units and Frontier Troops are not included.
 2. Identifiable
 3. Identifiable

NORTH FRONT 22ND JUNE, 1941.Staff

C-in-C Lieutenant-General Popov, M.M.

COS Major-General Nikishev, D.N.

Member of Military Council - Commissar of the Corps -

Klementiev, N.N.

HQ. Leningrad

NORTH FRONT - 14 ARMY

C-in-C Lieutenant-General Frolov, V.A.

COS Colonel Skvirskii, L.B.

Member of Military Council - Commissar of the Division -

Kriukov, A.I.

42 Rifle Corps - Major-General Panin, R.I.

I 104 Rifle Divisions :

Major-General Morozov, S.I.

II 122 Rifle Divisions:

Major-General Shevchenko, P.S.

III 1 Tank Division:

Baranov, V.I. - no rank mentioned.

14 Rifle Divisions - no commander mentioned.

52 Rifle Divisions - no commander mentioned.

23 Fortified Area - no commander mentioned.

NORTH FRONT - 7 ARMY

C-in-C Lieutenant-General Gorelenko, F.D.

NORTH FRONT - 23 ARMY

C-in-C Lieutenant-General Pshenikov, P.S.

NORTH FRONT

8 Independent Rifle Brigades (Hangö)

NORTH WEST FRONT - 22ND JUNE, 1941Staff

C-in-C :

Colonel-General Kuznetsov, F.I.

Chief of Staff:

Lieutenant-General Klenov, P.S.

Member of Military Council:

Corps-Commissar-- Dibrova, P.A.

Chief Armoured Forces:

Colonel Poluboyarov, P.P.

Deputy Commander M.D.:

Major-General Safronov, E.P.

Chief of Signals:

Colonel Kurochkin, P.M.

Assistant for Armoured Forces:

Major-General Vershinin, V.G.

H.Q. RIGA

NORTH WEST FRONT - 11 ARMY

C-in-C Lieutenant-General Morozov, V.E.

Chief of Engineers Lieutenant-Colonel, Firsov

3rd Mechanised Corps - Major-General Kurkin, A.V.

- I 5th Tank Division - Colonel Fedorov, F.F.
- II 2 Tank Division - Major-General Solyonkin, E.N.
- III 84 Motorised Division - No commander mentioned

29th Rifle Corps - No commander mentioned

- I 184 Rifle Division:
Sent to the rear to complete its manning.
- II 179 Rifle Division:
Sent to the rear to complete its manning.
- III No information

16th Rifle Corps - No commander mentioned

- I 5th Rifle Division - Colonel Ozerov, F.P.
- II 33 Rifle Division - No commander mentioned
- III 188 Rifle Division - Colonel Ivanov, P.I.
- 23 Rifle Division - No commander mentioned
- 126 Rifle Division - No commander mentioned
- 128 Rifle Division - No commander mentioned

4th Pontoon-Bridge Regiment - Major Belikov, N.P.

NORTH WEST FRONT - 27 ARMY

C-in-C Major-General Berzarin, N.E.

COS Colonel Bolznev, V.V.

65th Rifle Corps: No commander mentioned

- I 16 Rifle Division: No commander mentioned
- II No information
- III No information

22nd Rifle Corps:

- I 180 Rifle Division: No commander mentioned
- II 182 Rifle Division: No commander mentioned
- III No information

27th Rifle Corps:

- I 181 Rifle Division: No commander mentioned
- II No information
- III No information

3rd Independent Brigade - Colonel Gavrilov, P.M.

NORTH WEST FRONT - 8 ARMY

C-in-C Major-General Sobenikov, T.T.

12th Mechanised Corps - Major-General Shestopalov, N.M.

- I 23rd Tank Division - Colonel Orlenko, T.S.
- II 28th Tank Division - Colonel Chernyakhovskii, I.D.
- III 202nd Motorised Division - Colonel Gorbachev, V.K.

10th Rifle Corps - Major-General Nikolayev, I.F.

- I 10 Rifle Division - Major-General Fadeev, I.I.
- II 90 Rifle Division - No commander mentioned
- III 48 Rifle Division - Major-General Bogdanov, P.V.

11th Rifle Corps - Major-General Shumilov, M.S.

- I 125 Rifle Division - Major-General Bogaichuk, P.P.
- II No information
- III No information

22nd Territorial Rifle Corps (Formerly Estonian Army) - No names of commanders for the Territorial Corps.

180 Rifle Division
182 Rifle Division

29th Territorial Rifle Corps (Formerly Lithuanian Army)

179 Rifle Division
184 Rifle Division

24th Territorial Rifle Corps (Formerly Latvian Army)

181 Rifle Division
183 Rifle Division
67 Rifle Division - Major-General Dedaev, N.A.
11 Rifle Division - No commander mentioned

WEST FRONT - 22ND JUNE, 1941Staff

C-in-C General of the Army Pavlov, D.G.

Chief of Staff:

Major-General Klimovskii, V.E.

Member of Military Council:

Corps-Commissar Fominyi, A.F.

Deputy Commander:

Lieutenant-General Boldin, I.V.

Chief of Signals:

Major-General Grigorev, A.T.

Chief of Engineers: Major-General Vasil'ev P.M.

Chief of Engineers: Major-General Vorob'ev, M.P.
from 17/7/41.

Commander of Air Force:

Kopets, I.I., Committed suicide 22/6/41

Commander of Air Force:

General Tayurskii, U. (Kopets deputy).

Chief of Staff Air Force:

Colonel Khudyakov, S.A.

WEST FRONT - 4 ARMY

C-in-C Major-General Korobkov, A.A.

Chief of Staff - Colonel Sandalov, L.M.

Division Commissar Shlikov, F.I.

14 Mechanised Corps - Major-General Oborin, S.I.

- I 30 Tank Division - Colonel Bogdanov, S.I.
- II 22 Tank Division - Major-General Puganov, V.P.
- III 205 Motorised Division - Colonel Kodyurov, F.F.

28 Rifle Corps - Major-General Popov, V.S.

- I 42 Rifle Division - No commander mentioned
- II 6 Rifle Division - No commander mentioned
- III No information

47 Rifle Corps

- I 121 Rifle Division - No commander mentioned
- II 155 Rifle Division - No commander mentioned
- III 143 Rifle Division - No commander mentioned
- IV 55 Rifle Division - Colonel Ivanyuk, D.I.

17 Mechanised Corps - Major-General Petrov, M.A.

- I No information
- II No information
- III No information

WEST FRONT - 10 ARMY

C-in-C Major-General Golubev, K.D.

13th Mechanised Corps - Major-General Akhlyustin, P.N.

| | |
|-----|----------------|
| I | No information |
| II | No information |
| III | No information |

6th Mechanised Corps - Major-General Khatskelevich, M.G.

| | |
|-----|---|
| I | 4 Tank Division - Major-General Potaturchev, A.G. |
| II | 7 Tank Division - Major-General Borzilov, S.B. |
| III | 29 Motorised Division - No commander mentioned |

11th Mechanised Corps - Major-General Mostovenko, D.K.
 [Transferred to 3rd Army on 23-24th June]

| | |
|-----|--|
| I | 29 Tank Division - Colonel Studnev, N.P. |
| II | No information |
| III | No information |

6th Cavalry Corps - Major-General Nikitin, N.S.

| | |
|----|---|
| I | 36 Cavalry Division - No commander mentioned. |
| II | 6 Cavalry Division - No commander mentioned. |

WEST FRONT - 13 ARMY

C-in-C Lieutenant-General Filatov, P.M.

COS Petrushevskii, A.V. - No rank mentioned

Chief of Signals Colonel Akhremenko, I.F.

21 Rifle Corps - Major-General Borisov, B.S. (?)
24/6/41 given from the reserve of W.F. to 13 Army.

| | | | |
|-----|-------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| I | 17 Rifle Division | - | No commander mentioned |
| II | 24 Rifle Division | - | Major-General Galitskii, K.N. |
| III | 37 Rifle Division | - | No commander mentioned |
| IV | 50 Rifle Division | - | No commander mentioned |

44 Rifle Corps - No commander mentioned

| | | | |
|----|--------------------|---|------------------------|
| I | 108 Rifle Division | - | No commander mentioned |
| II | 64 Rifle Division | - | No commander mentioned |

WEST FRONT - 3 ARMY

C-in-C Lieutenant-General Kuznetsov, V.I.

11 Mechanised Corps - Major-General Mostovenko, B.K.
[Transferred from 10th Army 23-24th June]

WEST FRONT - 16 ARMY

C-in-C Lieutenant General Lukin, M.F.

5 Mechanised Corps - Major General Alekseenko, I.P.

| | | |
|-----|------------------------|--------------------------|
| I | 109 Motorised Division | - No commander mentioned |
| II | 13 Tank Division | - No commander mentioned |
| III | 17 Tank Division | - No commander mentioned |

WEST FRONT - 19 ARMY

C-in-C Lieutenant-General Konev, I.S.

34 Rifle Corps - No other information

I
II
III

25 Rifle Corps - No other information

I
II
III

WEST FRONT - 21 ARMY

C-in-C Lieutenant-General Gerasimenko, V.F.

WEST FRONT - 20 ARMY

C-in-C Lieutenant-General Kurochkin, P.A.

WEST FRONT - 22 ARMY

C-in-C Lieutenant-General Yershakov, F.A.

SOUTH WEST FRONT - 22ND JUNE, 1941Staff

C-in-C Colonel-General Kirponos, M.P.

Chief of Staff Lieutenant-General Purkayev, M.A.

Member of Military Council:

Corps Commissar Vashugin, N.N.

Chief of Signals:

Major-General Dobikin, D.M.

Chief of Operations:

Colonel Bagramyan, I.Kh.

Deputy Chief of Logistics:

Major-General Trutko, I.I.

Aide to Chief of Ops.:

Colonel Danilov

Chief of Armoured Forces:

Major-General Morgunov, P.N.

Chief of Combat Training General Paniukhov, V.V.

Chief of Intelligence Colonel Bondaryev, G.I.

Chief of Chemical Warfare General Petukhov, N.S.

Chief of Artillery Lieutenant-General Parsegov, M.A.

Chief of Engineers Major-General Il'in-Mitkevich, A.F.

Chief of Air Force Ptukhin.

SOUTH WEST FRONT - 26 ARMY

C-in-C Lieutenant-General Kostenko, F.Ya.

Rifle Corps

- I 99 Rifle Division - Commander Colonel Dementiev, N.I.
- II No information
- III No information

8 Mechanised Corps - Lieutenant-General Ryabyshev, D.I.

- I 12 Tank Division - No commander mentioned
- II 34 Tank Division - Colonel Vasilyev, I.V.
- III 7 Motorised Division - No commander mentioned

150 Machine gun Battalion - No commander mentioned

52 Independent Machine gun Battalion - No commander mentioned

SOUTH WEST FRONT - 12 ARMY

C-in-C Major-General Ponedelin, P.E.

17 Rifle Corps - No other informationI
II
III16 Mechanised Corps - No other informationI
II
III

SOUTH WEST FRONT - 6 ARMY

C-in-C Lieutenant-General Muzichenko, E.N.

COS Ivanov, N.I. - No rank mentioned

4 Mechanised Corps. - No commander mentioned

- I 8 Tank Division - No commander mentioned
- II 32 Tank Division - Colonel Pushkin, E.G.
- III 81 Motorised Division - No commander mentioned

6 Rifle Corps - Alekseev, I.I. - No rank mentioned

- I 41 Rifle Division - Major-General Mikushev, G.N.

[COS Colonel Yeremin N.]

- II 97 Rifle Division - Colonel Zakharov, P.M.
- III 159 Rifle Division - Maleev, M.F. - No rank mentioned

SOUTH WEST FRONT - 5 ARMY

C-in-C Major General Potopov, M.I.

COS Pisarevskii, D.S.

15 Rifle Corps - Lieutenant-General Fedyuninsky, L.I.

COS Major-General Ragoznyi

- I 45 Rifle Division - Major-General Sherstiuk, G.I.
- II 62 Rifle Division - Colonel Timoshenko, M.P.
- III No information

15 Mechanised Corps - Major-General Karpezo, I.I.

- I 10 Tank Division - General Ogurtsov, S.Ya. -
No definite rank.
- II 37 Tank Division - No commander mentioned
- III 212 Motorised Division. - No commander mentioned
- IV 25 Motor-cycle Regiment - No commander mentioned

22 Mechanised Corps - Major-General Kondrusev, S.M.

COS Major-General Tamruchi, V.S.

- I 19 Tank Division - No commander mentioned
- II 41 Tank Division - No commander mentioned
- III 215 Motorised Division - No commander mentioned

27 Rifle Corps - Major-General Artemenko, P.H.

- I 87 Rifle Division - Alyabushev, F.F. - No rank mentioned
- II 124 Rifle Division - Commander Major-General Sushchev, F.G.
- III 135 Rifle Division - Commander General Smekhartorov, F.N.
- No definite rank

ODESSA MILITARY DISTRICT 22ND JUNE, 1941
(24TH JUNE, 1941 SOUTH FRONT)*

Staff

C-in-C Colonel-General Cherevichenko, Ya.T.

COS Major-General Zakharov, M.V.

Member of Military Council:

Commissar of the Corps Kolobyakov, A.F.

Deputy COS Colonel Koshkin, A.M.

Chief of Engineers:

Major General Khrenov, A.F.

Commander of Air Force:

Major General Michugin, E.G.

H.Q. ODESSA

*C-in-C Appointed General of the Army Tyulenev, I.V.

The MD Forces were Reorganised as the 9 Army and Reinforced by 17 Rifle Corps and 16 Mechanised Corps of 12 Army (SW. Front) which were Reformed as the 18 Army.

48 Rifle Corps - Major General Malinovskii, P.Ya.

| | | | |
|-----|-------------------|---|------------------------|
| I | 74 Rifle Division | - | No commander mentioned |
| II | No information | | |
| III | No information | | |

35 Rifle Corps - Major General Dashichev, I.F.

| | | | |
|-----|-------------------|---|------------------------|
| I | 95 Rifle Division | - | No commander mentioned |
| II | No information | | |
| III | No information | | |

9 Independant Rifle Corps - Major General Batov, P.I.

| | |
|-----|----------------|
| I | No information |
| II | No information |
| III | No information |

2 Mechanized Corps - Major General Novoselskii, U.V.

| | |
|-----|----------------|
| I | No information |
| II | No information |
| III | No information |

4 Anti-Tank Brigade - Nedelin, M.I. - No rank mentioned

2 Cavalry Corps - Major General Belov, P.A.

| | | | |
|-----|---------------------|---|------------------------|
| I | 9 Cavalry Division | - | No commander mentioned |
| II | 5 Cavalry Division | - | No commander mentioned |
| III | 72 Cavalry Division | - | No commander mentioned |
| IV | Motorized Division | - | No commander mentioned |

14 Rifle Corps - Major General Yegorov, D.G. - No other information

I
II
III

7 Rifle Corps* - No other information

I
II
III

* 25th June, 1941 transferred to SW. Front.

C O N C L U S I O N

For nearly two years - August 1939 to June 1941 - the Soviet Government tried to keep out of the war while secretly, desperately preparing to defend itself. The outbreak of the war in Europe, while leaving the Soviet Union physically untouched and even creating an opportunity for some territorial gains, nevertheless impinged directly, and not always favourably, on several economic, military and political processes.

The economic process dates back to the beginning of the thirties when collectivization was enforced to enable the industrial 'take-off'; the military policy of modernization also started at the beginning of the thirties when Tukhachevsky took command as 'Chief of Ordnance' to supervise the technical planning of an offensive-minded Red Army, highly motivated and well equipped to cope with the problems of modern warfare. The political process dates back to the ideas that have eventually shaped the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Economic 'take-off' and the modernization of the armed forces originated new theoretical ideas about modern warfare, which created and were in turn boosted by some fine examples of aircraft, artillery and small arms design.* However, before the modernization of the armed forces succeeded in putting the Red Army on a par with other European forces, the process was cruelly hamstrung by the purges - the bizarre political off-shoot of a totalitarian regime.

The war in Europe intensified and started to close in on the

* These ideas and processes were dealt with in Chapters II and IV.

borders of the USSR exactly at the time when the Red Army began to recover from the severe shock of the purges and when the first prototypes of new aircraft and tanks rolled off the production line.* Research and development (to use a modern phrase), which preceded the appearance of new weapons, implied an amplified effort of vocational and training schools, and a considerable psychological modification in the outlook of foremen and workers. Many failures and belated achievements notwithstanding, the capability of Soviet industry to create the basis for a future war industry at a reasonable, although by no means low cost, was noteworthy. Vocational education and psycho-technical preparation of skilled labour usually takes many years before bearing fruit but the sense of uneasiness created by the war in Europe introduced into the Soviet system an element of haste.

At no point during that period was the Soviet Union able to attack Germany/a most damaging situation for an army that was imbued with the 'offensive spirit'.** The impossibility of any military initiative forced the Red Army into a defensive posture, very much against its own doctrine and training. Late in acknowledging the impossibility of carrying the battle on to enemy territory, the Soviet leadership tried desperately, feverishly and at the very last minute to create some possibilities for defence by erecting and repairing fortifications and by ordering hasty redeployment.*** The inherent contradiction between military doctrine and military posture

* See Chapters II and III.

** This is the subject of Chapter II.

*** See Chapter IV.

sheds light on the asymmetry in Soviet-German relations.

The stage was set after the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. On the one hand there was vigorous, ruthless Germany, which was aiming at a domination over Europe, and, on the other, an isolated USSR powerful in potential but weak in fact. For the whole length of this period every move of the two signatories emphasized the divergence between their different motivations until there was no more leeway for political bargain, diplomatic formula or military manoeuvre.* The German offensive and the Soviet defensive postures persisted until the very first shot of the war. All the warnings about the German threat could not change the fundamental dichotomy between a country which was prepared for surprise and one which was not only unprepared but, indeed, quite incapable of any act of preemption, which is the only true antidote to 'surprise'.

This seems to be a lesson which modern Soviet strategists have come to apply in the nuclear environment.**

* This is the argument of Chapter III and the first part of Chapter IV.

** An argument dealt with in Chapter I.

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[Map] Durch Luftbild Gedecktes Gelände Koluft.

Abschnittsstab Gotzmann, Stabsbildabteilung. [Aerial photos and interpretation.]

Die Kriegswehrmacht Der UdSSR OKH/Gen Stbh - Q Qu IV Abt. FHO(II) Nr. 100/41 Geh[eim] 15.1.41.

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Vorbereitungen zum Angriff V. 1.5-17.6.41. Frame Nos. 704496-704504.

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Akte Berta V. 4.6-15.6.1941. Frames Nos. 704748-704753.

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Bezug: Schreiben AOK 4, Ic V. 24.10.41.
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APPENDICES

Surprise (*səpraɪz*), *sb.* Forms: see the verb; also 6 *Sc.* *surpryis*, 9 *Sc.* *seerpreeso*. [*a.* *AF.*, *OF.* *surprise* (= *It.*, *Sp.* *sorpresa*, *Pg.* *surpresa*), *pa.* *pple.* *fem.*, used subst., of *surprendre*: see next. Cf. the earlier *SURPRISE sb.*]

1. *Mil.* The (or an) act of assailing or attacking unexpectedly or without warning; or of taking by this means; sudden attack or capture of a fort, a body of troops, etc. that is unprepared; † formerly also in more general sense, seizure (of a person, a place, or spoil).

1457 *HARDING Chron.* in *Eng. Hist. Rev.* Oct. (1912) 747 The wyynners had it all withoute surpryse. 1583 *Reg. Mag. Sic. Scot.* 106/2 Odiosissime et innaturalis surreptionis he surpryis, captivitatis, restrictionis he restraint regie persone. 1617 *MORVSON Itin.* II. 159 Carefull watches against sallies

or surprises of the Enemy. 1635 Haywood *Hierarchy* ii. 81 A news carried his, thou-hold gods into Italy, after the surprise and combustion of Troy. 1645 *PACIT Hierarchy* i. 11 The surprise of Munster [which had been besieged 18 months]. 1648 *Eden Pass* xvi. 101 Nor do I think that by the surprise of my letters, I have lost any more than so many papers. 1704 *SWIFT Batt. Rks.* Misc. (1714) 233 Resolving by Policy or Surprise, to attempt some neglected Quarter of the Antients Army. 1724 *Chron.* in *Ann. Reg.* 1291 Those taken prisoners in the surprise of the baggage. 1802 *JAMES Milt. Dict.* s.v. When it is found expedient to attempt a surprise in the field, a sufficient number of men must be collected for the purpose. 1879 *Florence Caesar* xiv. 203 A fortified camp, capable of resisting surprises. *Ibid.* 210 The surprise was complete; the Roman army was in confusion.

2. *gen.* The (or an) act of coming upon one unexpectedly, or of taking unawares; a sudden attack. Now rare or Obs. exc. as in b.

1598 *SHAKS. Merry W.* v. v. 121 The guiltness of my mind, the sodaine surprise of my powers. 1609 *TOURNEUR Funeral Poem* 439 Where sodaine dangers with a fierce attack Have made surprise upon him. 1622 R. HAWKINS *Pers. S. Sea* (1847) 135 Neither packe nor chest is free from his [sic, insects] surprises. 1766 *BECKER Corr.* (1844) IV. 301 This is no casual error, no lapse, no sudden surprise. 1891 H. DUMMOND *Account of Man* 108 What deer have to arm themselves most against is surprise.

b. To take by surprise (that a surprise): to come upon unexpectedly, take unawares; hence, to astonish by unexpectedness: = SURPRISE v. 3. 5. 1687 T. BROWN *Nights in Uproar* Wks. 1730 i. 78 To hinder the wicked from attacking you by surprise. 1691 tr. *Emilian's Observ. Journ. Naples* 305 He might always be sure of his Blow, and could never be taken at a Surprise. 1808 J. BURGESS *Miscellaneous Hum. Life* (ed. 3) ii. vii. A lucky pool, which takes you by surprise. 1849 *MACAULAY Hist. Eng.* viii. 11. 265 That he was taken by surprise is true. But he had twelve hours to make his arrangements. 1860 *TYNDAL Glac.* ii. x. 328 This statement, I confess, took me by surprise. 1875 *STUBBS Const. Hist.* II. xvi. 452 Richard took the kingdom by surprise.

c. An attack of illness; a sudden access of emotion. Obs.

1670 W. MONTAGU in *Bucklen MSS.* (Hist. MSS. Comm.) I. 489 She... was at the time of her surprise actually intending the proposal. 1697 *COLLIER Hist. Mon. Subj.* (1709) 120 In the Heat and Surprise of Passion. 1719 Dr. FOK *Crusoe* ii. (Globe) 330 An Access of Joy, a Surprise of Joy.

3. Something that takes one by surprise; an unexpected occurrence or event; anything unexpected or astonishing.

1594 *Arden of Feversham* iii. 30 Such great impression took this fond surprise. God grant this vision becom me any good. 1670 *COTTON Epigram* iii. xii. 639 He was in bed... when this news came to him; and doubtless it was convenient for him, that it should find him in that posture, the better to resist so strange a surprise. 1770 *FOOT Lane Lover* iii. 63 My being here was as much a surprise upon Miss Charlott as —. 1772 *FIRSTLY Inst. Relig.* (1782) i. 278 They are never any surprise to us. 1790 *MOTLEY Univ. Ser.* iv. (1876) 91 Surprises of this kind here, look like auguries of a greater surprise in the next world. 1879 S. C. BARTLETT *Egypt to Pal.* iv. 97 Egypt, it has been well said, is the land of surprises.

d. *spec.* A fancy dish, or an ingredient of a dish, a present, or the like, designed to take one by surprise.

1708 W. KING *Cookery* v. A Surprise is... a dish... which promising little from its first appearance, when open abounds with all sorts of variety. 1683 *HARPER'S Mag.* Jan. 210/1 One lady... worked day and night... to achieve her various 'surprises'. 1803 'J. S. WINKER' *Boat's Child* xii. 41 We want you to make us a surprise to put Father's Christmas present by. 1853 *KARL REMOUX Families* II. 234 Places of hot dough, with all sorts of juicy surprises inside them.

4. The feeling or emotion excited by something unexpected, or for which one is unprepared. +a. Alarm, terror, or perplexity, caused by a sudden attack, calamity, or the like. Obs.

1608 *SHAKS. Pers.* ii. 17 Our lodgings... Shooke as the earth did quake. Pure surprise and feare, made me to quite the house. 1723 Dr. FOK *Plague* (1754) 221, I have seen them in strange Agitations and Surprises on this Account. 1758 S. C. BARTLETT *Sermon* xvi. 455 Every thing... conspires to fill the soul with gloom and melancholy, may with the greatest surprise and consternation. 1816 *SCOTT Antiq.* xviii. My lord has been in sic a distress, and sic surprised, as I ne'er saw man in my life.

b. The feeling or mental state, akin to astonishment and wonder, caused by an unexpected occurrence or circumstance.

1695 tr. *Chavard's Trav.* Persia 20 The Vizier, fainig a kind of surprise. And what, said he, Are those Gentlemen still here? 1743 *POTTER'S Desc. East* i. n. v. 122 We went on to the north, the Nile running through the rocks... I ask'd them when we should come to the cataract, and to my great surprise they told me, that was the cataract. 1763 *STURGEON'S Hist.* Wks. 1715 II. 214 Surprise quickens enjoyment, and expectation banishes surprise. 1822 *SCOTT Nigel* x. Lord Dalgarno expressed much surprise at understanding that Nigel proposed an instant return to Scotland. 1908 G. K. CHRISTOPHER *Orthodoxy* iii. (1909) 52 By asking for pleasure, he lost the chief pleasure; for the chief pleasure is surprise.

with a. 1712 *ANDERSON Spect.* No. 357 28 Circumstances which give a delightful Surprise to the Reader. 1794 *MRS. RADCLIFFE Myst. Udolpho* xviii. She looked with a surprise on Annette. 1893 'H. S. MERRIMAN' *Rede's Corner* xiii. 138 Cornish... looked at the printed words with a vague surprise.

5. *attrib.* and *comb.*, as surprise attack, target, turn, visit; surpriso packet, a sealed packet with contents designed to surprise, sold at a trivial price;

also fig.; surpriso-party, (a) a body of troops for an unexpected attack; (b) U.S. and Colonial, a party who meet by agreement at a friend's house without invitation, bringing provisions with them; surpriso-pieco, a part of the mechanism of a repeating watch (see quot.).

1900 *Daily News* 4 Aug. 6/1 Our 'surprise attacks' only surprised ourselves by the thoroughness of the enemy's preparation for them. 1900 *Westm. Gaz.* 15 Sept. 3/2 There is a dash of the 'surprise packet'—if the expression may pass—about this bulky volume. 1841 *LAWER C. O'Malley* xiv. 235 Three cavalry regiments... intended for a 'surprise party'. 1860 O. W. HOLMES *Prof. Breakfast* iv. Now, then, for a surprise-party! 1872 *SCHIELE DE VERE Americanisms* 236 On such an occasion friends and parishioners appear suddenly—for it is generally a surprise-party at the same time—at the parsonage. 1884 F. J. BRITTON *Watch & Clockm.* 234 'Surprise Piece'... a loose plate under the quarter snail of a repeating watch which prevents the quarter rack reaching the snail if the mechanism is set going at the hour. 1894 *United Service Mag.* Oct. 39 Practice at 'surprise targets' appearing suddenly at unknown ranges. 1891 *CONSTR. MacEwen Three Wom. in One Boat* 7 'Surprise-turns and crooked bends make you, if you know your river, as crafty as any old fox. 1891 Dr. W. How in F. D. How *Mem.* xxiii. (1895) 323, I... paid them a 'surprise visit'.

b. *bell-ringing*. Applied to certain complicated methods of change-ringing.

1874 *BANISTER Change Ringing* 16 New Doubles... may be rung by a system generally adopted by experienced ringers in surprise methods. *Ibid.* 48 London Surprise Major. 1902 *Encycl. Brit.* xxvi. 521/2 A variety of 'plain methods' and 'treble bob methods', among the latter being the so-called 'surprise' methods, the most complicated and difficult of all.

Surprise (sūprai'z), v. Also 5-6 surpryse, 6-9 surprize, (7-pryze, -prico). [*f.* AF., OF. *surpris-*, pa. pp. of *surprendre* (= Pr. *sobrer*, *sorprendre*, It. *sorprendere*, Sp. *sorprender*, Pg. *sorprender*)—med. L. *superprēndere*, = *prēhendere*: see SUN- and PREHEND, and cf. the composition of *overtake*. See also the earlier SURPRISE and SURPRISE.]

1. *trans.* To 'take hold of' or affect suddenly or unexpectedly.

+a. Chiefly pass. To be seized with (or of) a desire, emotion, etc., a disease or illness. Obs.

1485 *CAXTON Chas. Gt.* 231 Thenne gannellon was surprised with this fals unyryce. 1490 — *Encydes* vi. 28 He shall be soo surprysed with angre and furyouse woodnes. c. 1500 *Melusine* i. 10 He was so surprysed of her love that he coude nat holde contenance. 1570 *FOXE A. & M.* (ed. 2) II. 993/2 The ruler... who surprised with lyke pride and disdain... caused his cappe to be hanged vpon a pole, charging... all... to do obeysance to the cappe. 1576 *FLEMING Panopt. Epist.* 315 My mynde being surprysed with sorrow. 1594 *PLAT Jewell* iii. 17 [They] were suddenly surprysed with a great loosenesse. 1611 *Bible Isa.* xxxiii. 14 The sinners in Zion are afraid, fearefulness hath surprysed the hypocrites. 1617 *MORRIS Hist.* ii. 296 He was surprysed with a burning feuer. 1667 *MILTON P. L.* ii. 753 All on a sudden miserable pain surprys'd thee. *Ibid.* vi. 774 Them unexpected joy surprys'd. c. 1700 *EVELYN Diary* 10 Apr. 1666, Visited Sir William D'Oyley, surprysed with a fit of apoplexie. c. 1720 Dr. FOK *Mem. Cavalier* (1840) 39 Surprysed with joy at the motion.

+b. To overcome, overpower (the mind, will, heart): to captivate. Obs.

1474 *CAXTON Chesse* iii. vi. (1883) 132 So that ye wyn or drynke surpryse hym and unscarpe his brayn. 1481 *Myrrour* i. v. 26 The moneye hath so surprysed them that they may extend to none other thing. 1611 *SHAKS. Wint.* T. iii. 1. 10 The care-drawing Voyce o' th' Oracle... surprys'd my Sense, That I was nothing. 1621 *ELING Debates* Ho. Lords (Camden) 24, I may be surprysed with error, but not corrupted. 1633 T. ADAMS *Exp.* 2 Peter ii. 14 A fair skin surpryseth a fleshly heart. 1676 *DRYDEN Aeneas* iv. 1, Power, like new Wine, does your weak Brain surprize. c. 1700 *EVELYN Diary* (Chandos Classic) 17 So... temperate, that I have heard he had never been surprysed by excess.

c. *absol.* or *intr.*

a. 1700 *EVELYN Diary* 8 Feb. 1645, The vapours ascend so hot that entering with the body erect you will even faint with excessive perspiration, but stooping lower as suddaine a cold surprizes.

2. *Mil.*, etc. To assail or attack suddenly and without warning; to make an unexpected assault upon (a place, body of troops, person, etc. that is unprepared); + to take or capture in this way.

a. 1548 *HALL Chron.* *Edu.* IV. 223 b, By some gyle or eynigne sodainly to trap and surprize the erle. 1611 *Bible Jer.* xlviii. 41 Kerioth is taken, and the strong holds are surprysed. 1637 A. LOVELL tr. *Ticconet's Trav.* iii. 27 His march was secret enough, though he hastened it to surprize Sorat. 1663 *Hughes Army* iii. xv. (Globe) 27/1 Lowe built boats... which... will strike to the sides of great shippers, and with their guns... either suddenly surprize the same or sink it. 1709 *DUFFY Teller* No. 1 78 The Enemy had form'd a Design to surprize two Battalions of the Allies. 1803 *JAMES FORSTER Thaiden* (1831) 16 A plan was laid for surprizing and taking the royal person. 1808 *SCOTT Life Dryden* D's Wks. 162, I. 173 A man, surprysed in the dark and beaten by ruffians, loses no honour by such a misfortune. 1867 *FREEMAN Norm. Cong.* (1871) I. vi. 459 Every effort to take or surprize the Norman outpost was rendered hopeless. 1883 J. F. MAURICE *Milt. Hist. Camp.* 1882 xii. 73 An army suddenly attacked within the lines which it had reckoned upon to ward off its enemy is in a military sense surpris'd.

+b. *gen.* To capture, seize; to take possession of by force; to take prisoner. Obs.

1588 *SHAKS. Tit. A.* i. 1. 234 Treason my Lord, Launio is surpris'd. 1593 — *Hen. VI.* iv. ix. 8 Is the Traitor Cade surpris'd? 1666 G. W[OODCOCKE] *Hist. Justine* ix. 41 Some he

beheaded, others banisht, and all their goods were surpris'd. *Ibid.* xv. 65 Surprizing the King, done to himself. 1634 *LITTLETON Trav.* iii. 94 When Nicopolis, and diverse other Cities were surpris'd from the Venetians. 1661 *Act 13 Chas. II.* c. 98 6 Ships which shall be surpris'd or seized as prize. 1667 *MILTON P. L.* xii. 453 He [sic, Messiah], there shall surprize The Serpent, Prince of aerie, and drag in Chaiues Thorough all his realme. 1799 *SHERIDAN Pizarro* ii. 1, A servant of mine, I hear is missing, whether surpris'd or treacherous I know not.

fig. 1592 *Kyd Sp. Trag.* iii. x. 90 Thy tresses, Ariadne twines, Wherewith my libertie thou hast surpris'd.

+c. To hold in one's power, occupy. Obs.

1540 *Act 32 Hen. VIII.* c. 24 Considering... that the Isle of Rhoddes... is surpris'd by the Turke. 1607 *DICKEN & WENSTER Sir T. Wyatt* A 2 b, With me, that in my handes, Surprize the Soueraigntie.

+d. To rescue or deliver as by force, 'snatch' (from something). Obs. rare-1.

1687 *Long. Gaz.* No. 2258/2 As also in your unparalleled Clemency, by which you have surpris'd your distressed Subjects from the jaws of Ruine.

3. To come upon unexpectedly; to take unawares; to take or catch in the act; hence fig. to find or discover (something) suddenly, to detect.

1592 *Saliman & Pers.* ii. ii. 264 If the Gouverneur Surprize me heere, I die by marshall law. 1655 tr. *Sorel's Cam. Hist. Francon* xii. 22 The Italian seeing himself surpris'd did... intreat him to give him leave to be gone. 1662 J. DAVIS tr. *Mandelslo's Trav.* 244 We were surpris'd by a calm, which kept us in the same place all that day. 1665 P. HIRSH *Diaries & Lett.* (1832) 168 A meeting at Wrexham surpris'd... some payd 5 lb some went to prison for 3 months accord. to the Act. c. 1700 *EVELYN Diary* 2 Feb. 1665, I saw a mag perform'd at Court by 6 gentlemen and 6 lads, surprizing his Majesty, it being Candlemas-day. 1726 *Pope Odys.* xii. 639 Ulysses will surprize the unfinished game. 1803-6 *WORMS. Ode Intim. Immort.* 148 High instincts before which our mortal Nature did tremble like a guilty Thing surpris'd. 1879 J. GUNN in *Cassell's Techn. Educ.* IV. 66/1 In order to surprize Nature in her wonders, he was wont to perambulate the garden... lantern in hand. 1880 *GROVE Dict. Mus.* i. 202/1 note, In the Finale... we almost surprise the change of style in the act of being made. 1885 *RUSKIN Foreriter* II. v. 193, I never travelled in bad weather unless surpris'd by it. 1890 *MAAKTENS Sir T. Aveling* xv, He had surpris'd an ugly secret about a Government tender.

+b. ?To 'overtake', anticipate. Obs. rare-1.

1591 *NASHE Prognost.* A 4, The effects cannot surprize the cause.

+c. *causatively*. To introduce unexpectedly, 'spring' upon some one. Obs. rare-1.

1769 *Chron.* in *Ann. Reg.* 75/1 To support the re-election, lest any candidate in the opposite interest should have been attempted to be surprized upon the county.

+4. To implicate or ensnare (a person) as by a sudden proposal or disclosure. Obs.

1642 *SUNGSHY Diary* (1836) 91 Not willing to use his old friendship... in a way to surprize his judgments. 1667 *MILTON P. L.* ix. 354 Least by some faire appearing good surpris'd She [sic, Reason] dictate false, and misinforme the Will. 1702 *VANBURGH False Friend* v. 1, If I did not know he was in love with Leonora, I could be easily surpris'd with what he has told me.

b. To lead unawares, betray into doing something not intended.

1695 *PHILLIPS* (ed. 5), To Surprize... to lead a Man into an Error, by causing him to do a thing over hastily. 1711 *ANDERSON Spect.* No. 112 7 3 If by chance he has been surpris'd into a short Nap at Sermon. 1742 *Act 15 Geo. II.* c. 30 Persons who have the Misfortune to become Lunatick, may... be liable to be surpris'd into unsuitable Marriages. 1818 *SCOTT Hist. Mtd.* ii, Many... whose feelings surpris'd them into a very natural interest in his behalf. 1873 *BLACK Tr. Thite* xvii, He had never yet met any woman who had so surpris'd him into admiration.

5. To affect with the characteristic emotion caused by something unexpected; to excite to wonder by being unlooked-for. + Formerly also in stronger sense (cf. SURPRISE sb. 4 a), to astonish or alarm; also, to excite to admiration. Often pass., const. at (+ with) or inf.; colloq. to be surpris'd at = to be scandalized or shocked at.

1655 *Theophrastus* 193 Alexandro acquainted him with the occasion of their coming thither, with which he was exceedingly surpris'd at first. 1687 A. LOVELL tr. *Therac's Trav.* i. 218 They... have Secrets which surprize the most knowing, many thinking them to be knacks of Magick. 1692 *L'ESTRANGE Fables* lxxi, People were not so much Frighted, as they were Surpris'd at the Bigness, and Uncouth Deformity of the Camel. 1719 Dr. FOK *Crusoe* i. (Globe) 156, I was exceedingly surpris'd with the Print of a Man's naked Foot on the Shore. 1768 *GOLDSM. Good-n. Man* i, You'll be surpris'd, Sir, with this visit. 1794 *MRS. RADCLIFFE Myst. Udolpho* xlvii, The apparition of the dead comes not... to terrify or to surprize the timid. 1816 *SCOTT Old Mart.* xxv, Malchire... was surpris'd at the degree of agitation which Halfour display'd. 1833 T. HOOK *Parson's Dan.* iii. vi, 'You surprize me,' 'I tell you truth,' said George. 1860 *TYNDAL Glac.* i. xii 63, I was surpris'd... to find some veins of white ice. 1908 R. FAGOT *A Cuthbert* xxi. 276 And yet you talk our language well—really very well. I am agreeably surpris'd.

absol. 1634 *KARL Rescom. Est. Transl. Verse* 146, On sure Foundations let your Fabrick Rise, and with inviting Majesty surprize. 1781 *COWPER Charity* 544 The turns are quick, the polish'd points surprize. 1845 K. W. HAMILTON *Pop. Educ.* ii. (1846) 30 It is... to be doubted, whether any class of Society be so strictly moral (as the poor). The statement may at first surprize.

+6. *Cookery*. To dress or serve in the manner of a 'surprise'. Obs.

1769 *MRS. RAFFAEL Eng. Housekpr.* (1778) 103 A Shoulder of Mutton surpris'd.

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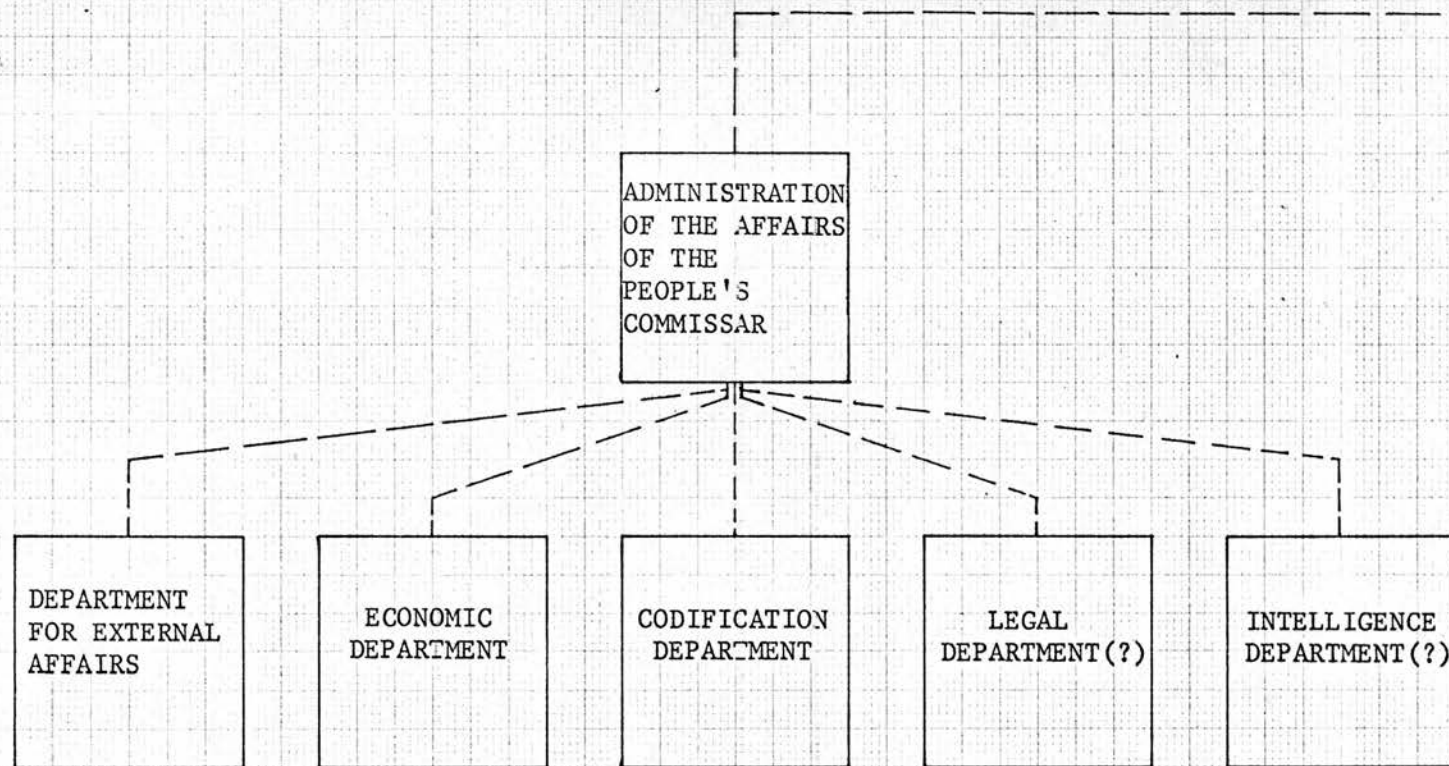
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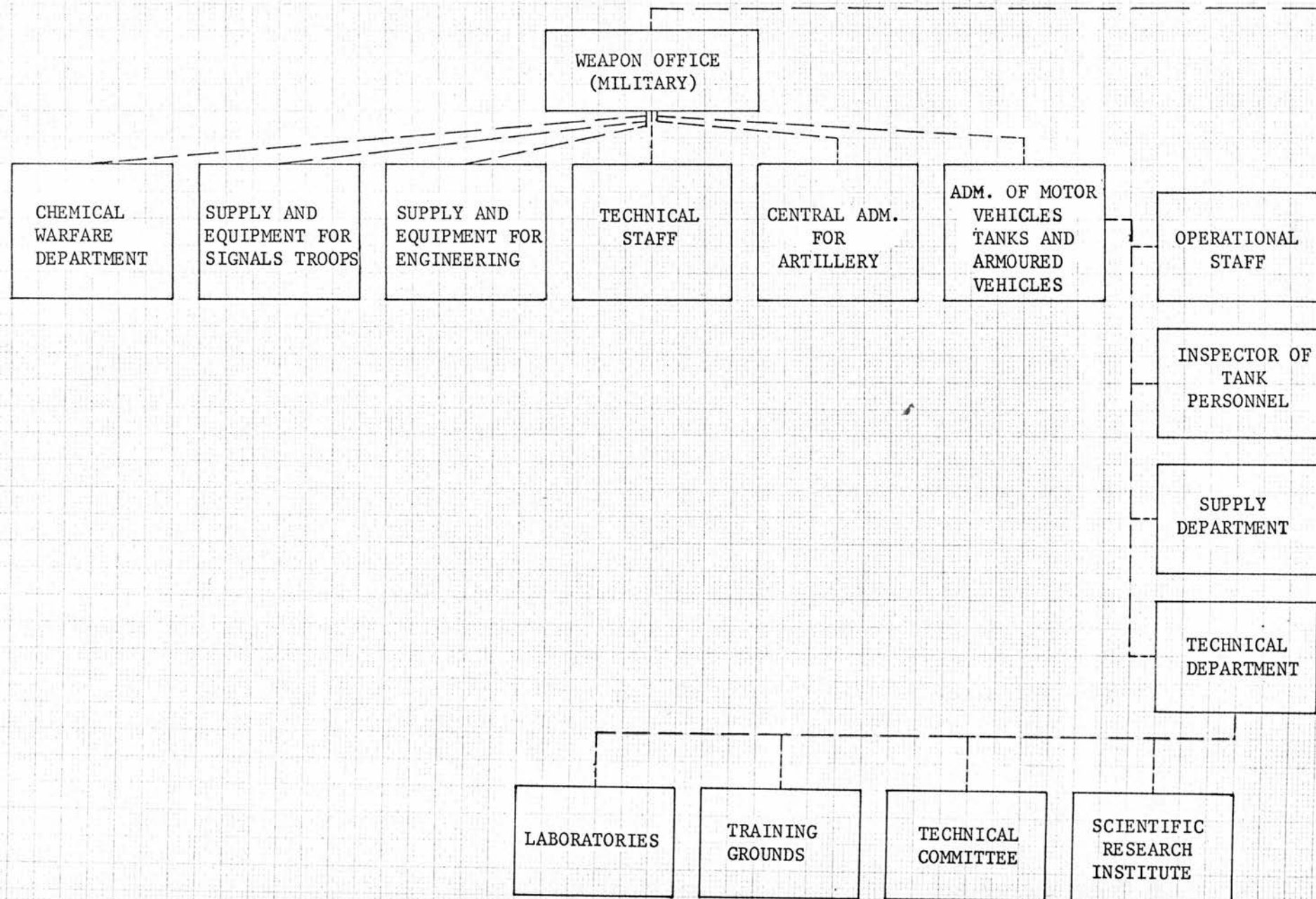
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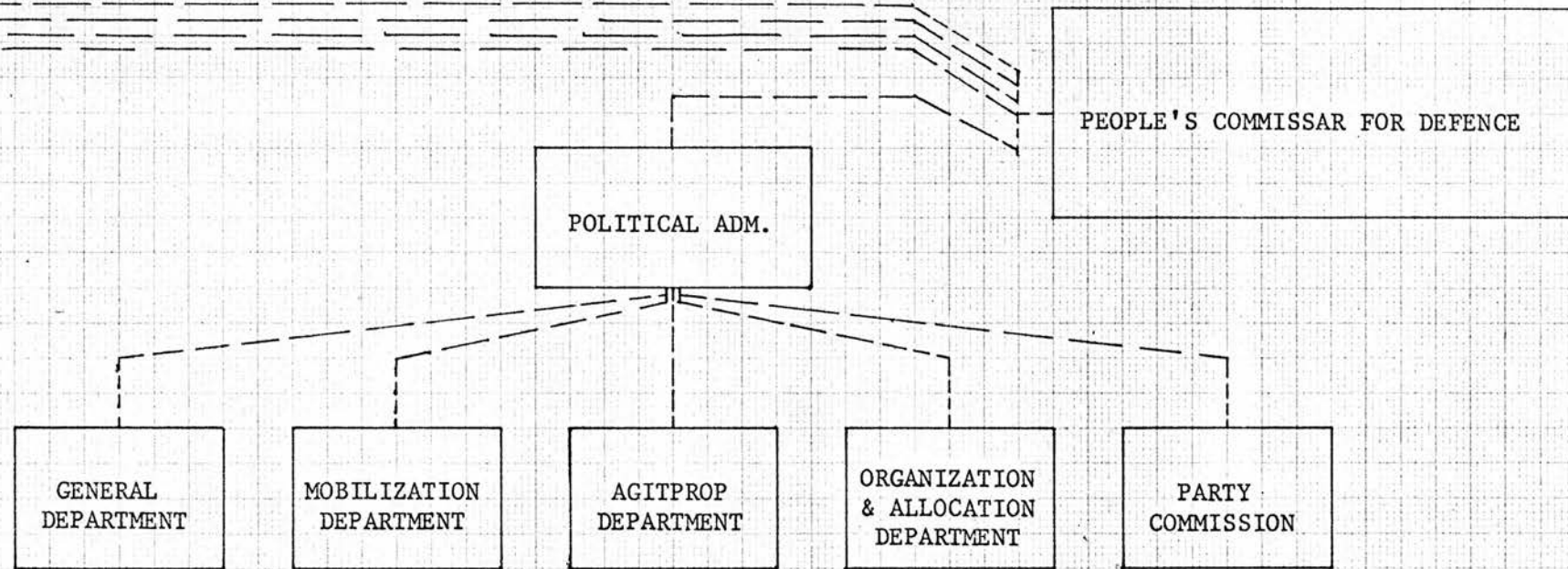
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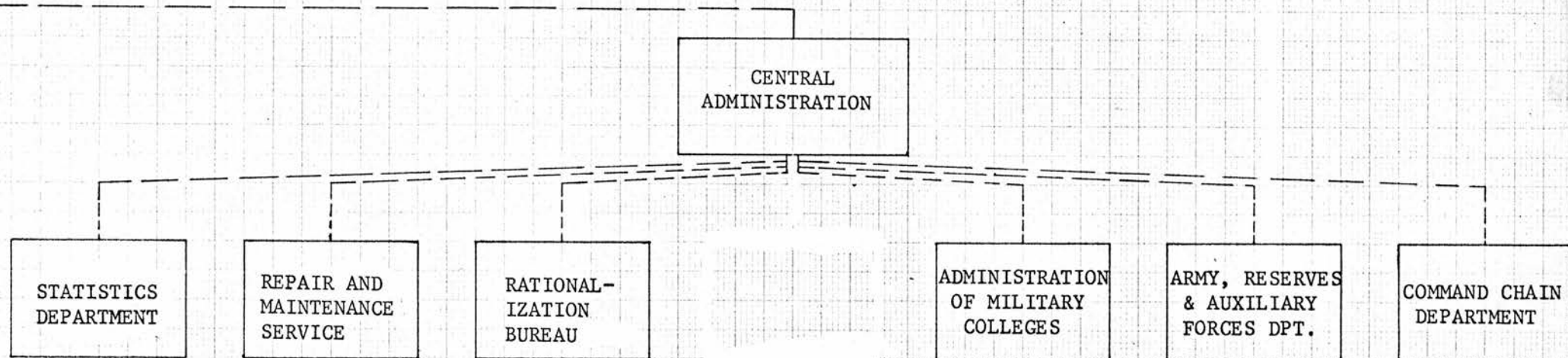
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